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BUDGET LEAK

Big win for cities

Billions pledged for social, green infrastructure projects, transit

Ottawa appears ready to boost its share of the funding it provides municipalities as it looks to fast-track an infrastructure spending spree, Torstar News Service has learned.

Finance Minister Bill Morneau will take the wraps off the Liberals' first budget on Tuesday.

And sources say municipal officials can expect good news on two fronts: A change to the traditional one-third funding formula — at least for some projects — and financial help for the prep work needed to get those infrastructure projects off the ground.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Thursday previewed the upcoming fiscal blueprint, saying his government has chosen "investment" over "austerity."

Trudeau also confirmed that

the Liberals will use the upcoming budget to roll back the age of eligibility for Old Age Security payments to 65 from 67 as promised, reversing a change introduced by the previous Conservative government.

The Liberals pledged a big hike in infrastructure funding during last year's election campaign — an extra \$60 billion over the coming decade. The budget will detail the government's plan to roll out the cash in two phases.

The initial phase, to be stretched over two years, will allow infrastructure cash to be spent on existing projects. Billed as "recapitalization," it will enable municipalities to tackle a backlog of unfunded work.

Trudeau confirmed Thursday that the government's initial focus will be on funding repairs to existing infrastructure.

"The first two years, we're going to do the unsexy things that governments hate to announce, recapitalization of infrastructure, maintenance, upgrades, the things that you don't get

to cut a ribbon and announce a shiny new building on," the prime minister said in an interview with Bloomberg.

Typically, the cost of infrastructure has been split equally between municipalities, provinces and the federal government. But municipal leaders have appealed to the federal

government to consider paying a greater share — up to 50 per cent — with the provinces paying around 33 per cent and municipalities on the hook for 20 per cent. It appears that appeal has hit home, with one source saying the one-third funding formula is a "thing of the past."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

'Very, very encouraging' for Edmonton



**Ryan
Tumilty**
Metro | Edmonton

Mayor Don Iveson was pleased to hear the federal government appears to be considering loosening its purse strings to make a big spend in municipal infrastructure.

Metro has learned next week's federal budget will include greater investment in

infrastructure, with Ottawa taking on a larger share of funding and loosening rules.

"That is very, very encouraging for us, but until it's in the budget we don't want to speculate prematurely," he said.

Iveson said if the government was prepared to offer dollars for planning and engineering that could move projects ahead.

"Having planning dollars advanced now would allow us to get projects shovel-ready for the projects coming in the balance of the 10 year agenda."

More on budget, page 4

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Faster, better and cheaper?

In a racy experiment, Metro reporters put Yellow Cab, Pogo and TappShare to the test

The amazing thing about Edmonton is that it's added several transportation options in little more than a year.

First came Pogo Car Share, then Uber, and most recently, TappCar, all piling atop the taxi industry's 1,300 or so cabs.

While Uber's gone (for now: See page 8), Pogo and TappCar remain. But with many taking to social media questioning how TappCar determines their fares — and with Pogo baiting

Uber in its recent ad campaign (Uber's down. Try Pogo) — we decided to settle this with a good old race.

The premise: Three Metro writers start at the office (99 Street and Jasper Avenue) and race to the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market.

The rules: At 12:05, you may open the smartphone app and start your trip.

May the best service win.

METRO



Tim arrives blaring some unknown '90s synth-pop band on the radio.

Tim is No. 2

Tim Querengesser's route: From Jasper at 99th Street, we took 100th Street to McDougall Hill Road, up Scona Road, onto Saskatchewan Drive, south on 100th Street, west on 83rd Avenue.

Notes on the experience: Part of the Pogo experience is walking

to the car. The closest car was about four blocks northeast, so in the wrong direction.

Once inside, though, I was happy — heated seats, my choice of the radio channels, my choice of route.

Unfortunately, as I've found with Pogo, if you park in an inappropriate spot, you're on the hook for the ticket.

WINNER
1ST

Yellow Cab

TIME: 13 minutes

COST: \$10.80 before tip

BASIC FARE: \$3.60 opening fare, \$0.20 every 136 metres or every 24 seconds wait time



Samantha beats the photographer to the Farmers' Market by taking a Yellow Cab. ALL PHOTOS CHAD STEEVES/FOR METRO

Below: Alex arrives in the snazzy, but slower, TappCar.

Alex last...but not least

Alex Boyd's Route: From Jasper at 99 Street, we took Bellamy Hill. A veteran taxi driver may have anticipated that turn.

Notes on the experience: When I opened the door to the TappCar I was hit with a wave of new car smell. Indeed, the driver informed me that his previous vehicle (a 2008 model) was too old for TappCar so he bought a new one. It's worth noting that when you sign up for the app you can set your default tip, so a tip was automatically added to my fare on top of the above fee (I tipped twice accidentally as a result).

Notes on the app: It decided to forget my account just before our race. I had to call Pogo and we reset the account. That took about five extra minutes.

* The Pogo was used to transport all reporters back to work. Including a five-minute photo session and the return trip, total cost was \$13.82.

2ND

Pogo

TIME: 16 minutes

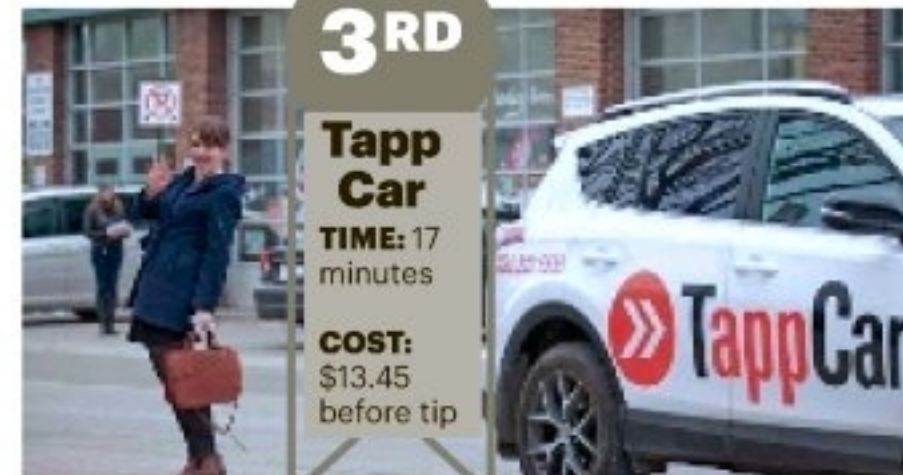
COST: 6.91 before tip

3RD

Tapp Car

TIME: 17 minutes

COST: \$13.45 before tip



My driver was really nice and was happy to answer all my TappCar questions. Mid-ride, I realized I hadn't registered my credit card in the app but he assured me I could pay by cash or debit.

Notes on the app: Easy to use, and accurately determined my location and how far away my driver was when I booked. I couldn't figure out how to tell what my fare was going to be in advance, though.



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2

THINGS THE
FEDERAL BUDGET
MIGHT CHANGE
FOR EDMONTON

With news the federal government's infrastructure budget could ease rules and see lots of funding flow to cities, here are some of the projects that are near the top of the city's wish list. METRO



1 The West End LRT

The proposed extension of the Valley Line would take it from downtown — where work on the existing line will stop — all the way to Lewis Estates. When it's complete, that would allow commuters to go from West Edmonton Mall through downtown and down to Mill Woods Town Centre. Council hasn't confirmed this is the next LRT line the city will build, but a considerable amount of engineering and planning work has been completed.

METRO FILE

\$1.4B

The most recent estimate on the cost for the project placed it at \$1.4B. The estimate may have since changed.

2 Yellowhead Highway

The city's dream of making the Yellowhead a free-flow highway is hoped to decrease travel times considerably, but the city does not currently have the funding to build it.

The city would build several interchanges along the highway and modify or even close some intersections to achieve free-flow. Free flow doesn't come cheap and the last, now very out of date estimate, for the entire project pegged it at \$823 million.

\$1B

The highway project is expected to exceed more than \$1 billion, well beyond initial estimates.

With cost escalation and inflation, the project is almost certainly more than \$1 billion now.

METRO FILE

Budget changes
a jolt for projects

INFRASTRUCTURE

Alterations to
feds' limit on
contributions
would help city

Ryan
Tumilty
Metro | Edmonton

Some big things could come off Edmonton's wish list if the federal government loosens its rules around major infrastructure spending.

Metro has learned the Trudeau government will likely announce in next Tuesday's budget that it will fund a higher percentage of individual projects than its current contributions, which have been capped at a third of funding.

It will also likely be open to paying for upfront design and engineering costs, which it currently does not.

Bradley Leeman, the city's director of infrastructure and funding strategies, said this could be significant for Edmonton's bottom line.



At the big city mayors conference in September, Edmonton Mayor Don Iveson and others called on Ottawa to get serious about infrastructure funding. THE CANADIAN PRESS

"At a basic level, we can leverage the same amount of city dollars to do more things," he said.

Leeman said having Ottawa open to paying for design could also help get more projects ready.

"If we want to get a project that is decent and we can stand behind we have to do some upfront work," he said.

Coun. Andrew Knack said the changes would be welcome news for Edmonton and could mean the city would see the new LRT lines get under construction soon.

"It's really critical to let us

start some of that work to get us moving ahead of what we have been projecting," he said. "We all know we are way too far behind in LRT construction."

Mayor Don Iveson said if the federal government was paying for design funds it could also be a great boost for the Alberta economy.

"Design money this year allows us to put shovels in the ground much faster and so that would allow us to accelerate some of the other projects we would like to move on like the Yellowhead or future LRT."

IN BRIEF

Valley Line LRT to cost
less than initial estimate

Edmonton's new Valley Line LRT will cost less than the city has estimated, giving taxpayers a small break.

A report going to council recommends reducing the proposed tax increase from 0.08 to 0.06 per cent.

The change will only save less than \$5 for the average taxpayer, but the decrease will continue into future years as well.

RYAN TUMILTY/METRO



ST. PATRICK'S DAY A TOAST TO THE IRISH Reggie, Bishop and Mark get an early start to St. Patrick's Day at O'Byrne's Irish Pub in Edmonton Thursday. CHAD STEEVES/FOR METRO

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Edmonton taxpayers could face a \$1.4 billion bill because residential neighbourhoods don't generate enough taxes to pay the cost of maintaining them. CHAD STEEVES/FOR METRO

City stands to lose on new homes

DEVELOPMENT

3 proposed developments could generate \$1.4B shortfall



Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Edmonton

The city's newest neighbourhoods won't come close to paying for themselves and will leave taxpayers in other parts of the city on the hook for \$1.4 billion, city staff say.

In a report going to council next week, city staff analyzed the cost of three new neighbourhoods — Decoteau and Riverview in the south and Horse Hills in the northeast — over the next 50 years. The developments are estimated to ultimately house 200,000 people.

Staff concluded that, even with developers spending \$3.8 billion to build the areas, the city will have to spend \$10.6 billion on new infrastructure and to maintain and eventually renew it.

That bill includes everything from upkeep of commuter roads to bringing in three recreation centres, five fire stations, two libraries and 396 hectares of park space.

The city will collect an estimated \$9.2 billion in revenue, through things like taxes and

levies — leaving a major shortfall.

Edmonton's chief planner, Peter Ohm, said the city's analysis showed what they have long suspected. He said they will now launch a discussion on how to address the problem.

"Administration has been consistent in acknowledging that these shortfalls are concerning and need to be managed," Ohm said. "The residential nature of these neighbourhoods doesn't generate enough tax revenue."

The planning department recommends that the city study a number of options, including moving away from property taxes, charging developers higher levies, potentially building less expensive infrastructure and looking at changing how the city grows.

Coun. Andrew Knack said the report is helpful and it's time the city had a serious conversation about development.

"We've always suggested there has been quite a lot of cost to building new neighbourhoods. This put a dollar amount to it."

Kurt Borth, a PhD candidate at the University of Alberta who studies sprawl, said the city really needs to understand the alternatives.

"The real thing would be seeing what it would cost to keep a similar amount of people in a mature neighbourhood," Borth said.

But he commended the city for gathering the data, so it can understand the problem.

"Without the data there is not much you can say or do."

CITY HALL

Blatchford energy system now on hold



Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Edmonton

City council has chosen to delay development at Blatchford for a year as it waits for more information on a district energy system.

Administration has two "shovel-ready" options for a district energy system in Blatchford. One of those options will cost slightly less than \$100

million, while the other costs just over \$200 million.

The system is designed to service all 30,000 future residents of Blatchford with heat and hot water, using geothermal and other renewable technologies.

The delay is meant to allow the city to seek provincial and federal funding for the project.

Mayor Don Iveson said the city can pause now without being affected in a negative way.

"In this economic environ-

ment, I don't think we need to rush to bring lots on."

Both levels of government are talking about making investments in just this kind of project, Iveson added.

"There is actually dollars sitting there that I think this would be a great project for," he said.

Iveson also said a carbon-neutral community like this could really boost Alberta's credibility on the environment.

"Some people still need

some convincing in other parts of the country and this is a great signature project to demonstrate that leadership."

John Archer, a spokesman for Premier Rachel Notley, said the government likes the Blatchford idea but it's too early to weigh in.

"The Blatchford development is intriguing and forward-thinking. We applaud the city of Edmonton for wanting to build this kind of community," he said, in an email.

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Watch lover credits recent pickup with saving his life

HEALTH AND TECHNOLOGY

Heart-rate monitor shows man fatigue wasn't just flu



Alex Boyd
Metro | Edmonton

Dennis Anselmo says his Apple Watch saved his life.

The 62-year-old contractor was building a fence in Edmonton last year when he started to feel sick.

"I was hot and cold and kind of shaky. I figured I was coming down with the flu," he said.

He then told his helper he had to take a break and sit down.



This watch is on my wrist from morning to night.

Dennis Anselmo

Out of curiosity, Anselmo checked his pulse on the Apple Watch he'd bought only two weeks earlier. To his surprise, he saw his heart was running at 210 beats per minute — a normal resting heart rate is between 60 and 100.

"That told me it was time to call an ambulance," he said on the phone from his home in Morinville.

Not only had Anselmo suffered a heart attack, but one of the arteries in his heart was almost totally clogged. Doctors told him that if he hadn't gotten treatment right away, he would have likely suffered a second, fatal attack within hours of the first.

Anselmo hadn't bought the watch for its life-saving potential. Instead, he liked watches.

He already owned more than 30 high-end watches but says he was attracted to the Apple Watch's ability to receive messages while working without getting out his phone.

But soon after getting it, he started playing around with other features, including the pulse tracker.

Now, those other fancy watches have been benched.

"My wife jokes that if you open the closet you can hear them screaming to be let out of the safe," he said. "This watch is on my wrist from morning to night."

His story is making headlines around the world. He mentioned it to an Apple Store employee recently, and word spread.

He says people keep asking if Apple has done anything for him after he shared his story — it hasn't — but while he says that would be nice, he's got a different goal in mind.

"The big thing for me is if one other person reads this and gets a smart watch that has this feature because it has the potential to save their life, then I would feel pretty good."



Contractor Dennis Anselmo shows off the smart watch that he says saved his life. CONTRIBUTED

COMMUNITY

Alberta Avenue to fight crime

A new program by Edmonton police wants to see residents of Alberta Avenue be more active in preventing crime.

Alberta Avenue, one of Edmonton's rapidly developing inner-city neighbourhoods, experienced a spike in crime last year, but Const. Jeff Thomsen said tackling it will be a team effort.

Thomsen said the idea to get the community more involved came from residents themselves.

"When I explained the police role in crime prevention, the community kept saying, 'What can we do? How can we help?'"

To answer that question, police held a community event in the neighborhood Thursday evening. Residents told their stories and vented frustrations.

"A lot of the crime we see around there is very preventable ... what we would call a crime of opportunity," Thomsen said.

If the program is successful, Thomsen said there are plans to expand it to other areas of Edmonton. ALEX BOYD/METRO



"We Believe in 118" graffiti on 118th Avenue. MACK MALE/FLICKR

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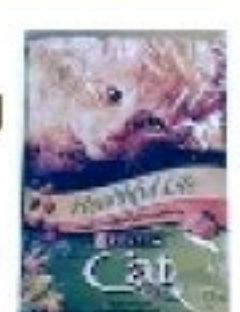
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NDP expenses questioned

MARCELLA MUNRO

Opposition challenges Calgary rep's writeoffs



Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

Premier Rachel Notley's Calgary rep rebuffs the Wildrose Party's claims that she started milking the public purse months before she began working for the government.

Documents by the Official Opposition show Marcella Munro, stakeholder relations and communications manager at the McDougall Centre, began writing off expenses on June 14, racking up \$3,297.29 from June 17 to July 3.

Munro didn't sign her contract for the stakeholder rela-

tions position until July 27.

But the Premier's office confirmed Munro was contracted by the government from June 15 to July 3, working with the communications team in the Human Services department.

The government said she was sole sourced, but didn't meet the \$10,000 threshold for her contract to be disclosed publicly.

However, the Wildrose charge that receipts weren't attached to some of Munro's expenses — a move that contradicts government policy saying that disclosing receipts for travel expenses is required.

The government said her receipts are easily viewable online.

During Thursday's question period at the Alberta Legislature, Deputy Premier Sarah Hoffman said the government will look into the matter, adding inappropriate expenses will be paid back by the employee.

"We need to make sure we know whether or not they were an employee."

Deputy Premier
Sarah Hoffman

"We need to make sure we know whether or not they were an employee or a contractor and what was involved," she said.

The Wildrose said it also appears Munro may have received a free week's pay, but the government disputes that claim, too.

The Premier's Office said her first day at the McDougall Centre was on Aug. 17, though she began working on Aug. 10, which is what her contract stated.

Munro also received \$7,000 for her move from Vancouver to Calgary.



The Wildrose claim Marcella Munro wrote off expenses before she was hired as the government's Calgary rep. CONTRIBUTED

RIDESHARE

Uber hopes to be back



Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Edmonton

Uber hopes public pressure will persuade the province to let it back on Edmonton's streets.

The service went offline March 1 after Edmonton's rideshare bylaw came into force.

The bylaw left the issue of insurance and licensing in the province's hands — and the province ruled rideshare drivers would need Class 4 licence and will not approve a proposed insurance policy from Uber until July 1.

Ramit Kar, the company's general manager in Alberta, said their new campaign — which features videos of drivers and users sharing why they use Uber — will show Uber's importance.

Since the bylaw came into force, the city has seen several other companies come forward who are willing to follow the existing rules. Kar said he welcomes the competition, but thinks Uber still has a place.

"I still think there is room for us."

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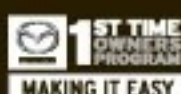
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STEPHAN TRIAL

Ezekiel was severely dehydrated: Doctor

The trial of parents facing charges in their young son's death was abruptly adjourned today after the defence objected to questions the Crown was asking one of its witnesses.

A doctor was testifying about Ezekiel Stephan's condition after he was rushed to Cardston Hospital in southern Alberta in March 2012.

Court was told the toddler, who was almost 19 months old, was pale and his skin had no life

or texture when he arrived at the hospital.

When the doctor suggested the child's condition indicated severe dehydration, defence lawyer Shawn Buckley suggested the jury be excused from the courtroom. Buckley's concerns and discussions between himself, the Crown and the judge can't be reported.

David and Collet Stephan have pleaded not guilty to failing to provide the necessities

of life for Ezekiel, who died of bacterial meningitis.

Their trial is to resume Friday.

The Crown is arguing the Stephens didn't do enough to ensure their son had proper access to medical care. Meningitis, an inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord, can be life-threatening if not treated right away with antibiotics.

A naturopath testified Wednesday that she advised Collet

Stephan to take Ezekiel to a hospital immediately.

Tracey Tannis told the jury that she made sure an employee passed on the advice when the mother called her Lethbridge clinic in March 2012.

Court has heard little Ezekiel stopped breathing soon after that and his parents called for an ambulance. He was rushed to a Calgary hospital, where he died a week later.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Hussein Jomha, right, and Alaadine Rakhmeih, of the Edmonton Islamic Relief Centre, buying cooking pots for refugees.

COURTESY HUSSEIN JOMHA

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Hotline for refugees launched

VOLUNTEERS

Arabic-speakers will be on the line with answers



Sanam Islam
Metro | Edmonton

Starting Friday, Syrian refugees in Edmonton can call a hotline to have questions answered — in Arabic — about settling into the city.

"Syrian newcomers will be able to ask any questions regarding education, medical care, how to get around the city — basically about any challenge they might have," said Hussein Jomha, chairman of the Edmonton Islamic Relief Centre, which is launching the hotline.

"My phone wouldn't stop ringing almost 24/7, typically till about midnight. There were endless questions. My wife was like, 'If you're not going to shut off this phone, you're going to sleep outside,'" Jomha said with a laugh.

"That's when I started thinking about a hotline."

Jomha said the most common questions he gets are about obtaining basic items such as furniture and bedding, how to get drivers' licences and how to learn English.

Despite the hotline only officially launching Friday, Jomha said word has already spread.

"It rings at least once every hour. Someone called yesterday morning and asked about a doctor for his kid, so I sent him somebody to make an appointment," Jomha said.

For now, Jomha and three other Edmonton Islamic Relief Centre board members — all fluent in English and Arabic — will be managing calls from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.

"These people need to communicate with someone who speaks their language, will not take advantage of them, is familiar with their challenges, and knows how to talk to them and guide them," Jomha said.

Eventually, the centre will be hiring someone full-time to manage the hotline, he said. It is also working on compiling a list of professionals and resources that the employee will be able to refer to in order to assist callers.

In addition to newcomers, the hotline will also be a resource for sponsors, who often need help with translation, transportation and finding household items for newcomer families, Jomha said.



It rings at least once every hour.

Hussein Jomha

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A taste of Paris in the city

THE FRENCH SQUARE

Woman hopes to turn empty building into Parisian hub



Tim Querengesser
Metro | Edmonton

Myriam Melsan Touré has a bold, possibly delicious dream for a beloved but abandoned Edmonton landmark.

Not only does she and three partners — who like Touré are recent immigrants to the city from Paris — want to preserve and transform the Canada Permanent Building into a hub for all things French, they want to do it with flair.

And they want to do it with the community's backing.

The group has created a Kickstarter campaign for their project, The French Square, aimed at raising \$100,000 for their hope to build a place that promotes "French art de vivre."

But there's more to it, Touré said.

"The Kickstarter is to create community awareness," she said, noting the main financial backing for the group's ideas is from within. "We want to have the community commitment into the project. That will give us the assurance that the community is on board with us."

If realized, The French Square will see four levels of all things Parisian in the heart of the city: a bakery and café on the first floor, a wine cellar and fine-goods store on the second, a French bistro on the third and a rooftop terrace on, well, the roof.

Touré said the group hopes to open by early 2017.

The idea sprung from Touré

and her husband Olivier Nelson — an accomplished baker — who hopes to start a hub of French gastronomy in Edmonton.

But it's also about the building itself.

The Canada Permanent Building was erected in 1910 as the home for the Canada Permanent Loan Company, and its baroque style and elegant materials are now revered by historians (the building is one of few in Edmonton recognized by Canadian Register of Historic Places).

When Touré and Nelson came to Edmonton, Touré said they didn't see many older buildings. "We fell in love with Permanent Building," she said. "It kind of looks like buildings you find in Paris. It reminded us of home."

On the group's Kickstarter page, they implore that preserving heritage buildings is a "vital component" of urban revitalization. "We want to be in the heart of the city. It's more a matter of location," Touré said.

She said the group has been overwhelmed with the positive support for their idea. They've raised nearly \$2,000 and their social media efforts have many followers. "The feedback is amazing," Touré said.



Despite being one of Edmonton's most esthetically pleasing buildings, the Canada Permanent Building has been empty for years. CHAD STEEVES/FOR METRO

COURT

Fired councillors prepare for court challenge

More than 50 people have rallied outside the county office in Thorhild, north of Edmonton, to show support for three councillors fired by the province.

Reeve Dan Buryn and councillors Wayne Crosswell and Larry Sisson were dismissed last week over concerns about council infighting, conflict of interest and poor decision-making.

A judge granted them a temporary injunction pending the results of a court challenge to be heard in Edmonton on Friday.

Rally organizer Kathleen Bruce says the government's decision to fire the councillors is based on a report that is full of errors.

Crosswell says the councillors are heartened by the show of support and have asked for a judicial review of the report.

The government declined comment because the case is before the courts.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

“We fell in love with Permanent Building. It kind of looks like buildings you find in Paris. It reminded us of home.”
Myriam Melsan Touré

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Susan Ormiston for The National

news

Investigates



David Common for CBC News

14

Edmonton **metro** NEWS



Nuit Blanche brought thousands of people downtown at night. NUIT BLANCHE/CONTRIBUTED

Nuit Blanche to be scaled down in '16

PUBLIC ART

'Petite Nuit' seeks artistic approaches to urban space



After inspiring 50,000 people to come downtown in the pitch dark for Edmonton's first Nuit Blanche last September, organizers are planning another festival for 2016.

Petite Nuit, set for Sept. 21-

24, will see four or five exhibits set at night, based throughout the city, said Nuit Blanche Edmonton chairwoman and president, Ruth Burns.

Burns — who, along with an army of volunteers, worked for several years to bring the international art festival that started in Paris in 2002 to Edmonton — said the plan has always been to have a large festival one year and a smaller one the next.

"It's a biennial event and then we have off-year programming," she said.

Petite Nuit will see temporary artworks set up throughout the city and will again use the night as a way to amplify them,

Burns said.

At the moment the organization is calling for submissions and hopes to feature a strong contingent of local artists.

Burns also said the organization is continually in conversation with communities about Nuit Blanche (and Petite Nuit) in an effort to have it more directly reflect the neighbourhoods and people that it descends upon.

"I think for us it's an ongoing conversation," she said. "We're looking for curatorial and artist approaches to urban spaces that are sensitive and smart, and speak to the dynamics of a neighbourhood."

ENERGY

Lots of time for move from coal, says \$600K consultant

The man hired to move Alberta away from coal-fired electricity says that while it's a complex challenge, time is on the province's side.

Terry Boston said Thursday that with a deadline of 2030, there's enough lag time to craft solutions that work best for the industry, ensure fair and consistent rates for taxpayers, and keep the system running.

"Between now and 2030 we

have a lot of time to analyze and to take the corrective action," Boston told reporters in a conference call.

As part of its climate change plan, Alberta is shutting down coal-fired electricity generation by 2030 for health reasons and to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions. Twelve of the 18 coal-fired generating units are already expected to be shut down by then, so Boston will

focus on the remaining six.

Boston, who is from Tennessee, will be paid up to \$600,000 to deliver a list of options to the government by the fall.

Economic Development Minister Deron Bilous has said he will be working and meeting over the next few months with people in the communities that will be affected when the transition from coal occurs.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Province to merge agencies, boards

MONEY Streamlining to save the government around \$35M

Alberta's finance minister says the government will axe or amalgamate at least 25 of its agencies, boards, and commissions, saving \$35 million over the next three years.

"It'll make us more nimble as a government, it will obviously save us money, and it won't affect our longterm governance for the important things moving forward," Joe Ceci said Thursday.

Ceci declined to say which boards face the axe or will be reconstituted. He said details will be released in or around the 2016-17 budget on April 14.

The decision comes after a review of 136 boards, comprising many of the heavy hitters like Alberta Health Services, which has a \$14-billion annual budget.

The government also reviewed the Alberta Energy Regulator, the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, the Alberta Securities Commission, Alberta Treasury Branches, Alberta Transportation Safety Board, the Health Quality Council of Alberta, the Labour Relations Board, Municipal Government Board, Occupational Health and Safety Council and the Public Service Pension Board and the Workers' Compensation Board.

It is the first of a three-stage review of all 301 agencies, boards, and commission across government.

Ceci said it's critical to find savings wherever possible given



Finance Minister Joe Ceci. METRO FILE

that low oil prices are blowing large holes in revenues.

"There's still more work to do, but I'm pleased with the results so far," he said.

"Albertans expect us to be prudent and be balanced in our approach because of this significant deficit."

Alberta Party Leader Greg Clark said he supports the move to reduce the boards, but urged the government to not pursue false economies by curtailing the work of boards fostering research and innovation.

"If they're going to collapse that and jeopardize longterm research that is underway, that is a concern," said Clark.

Along with the review, Premier Rachel Notley's govern-

ment will be introducing legislation in the current sitting to update and streamline how the boards operate.

"It's going to look at improving public oversight and stewardship of the agencies boards and commissions ... in part to bring compensation and accountability and transparency back into line with the public service," said Ceci.

Late last year, the Notley government passed legislation that will soon make public the names of members of some agencies, boards, and commissions who receive more than \$125,000 a year in total compensation.

The first such report is scheduled to be online on June 30.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CRIME

Red Deer man dies trying to stop theft of cargo truck

RCMP say a man in central Alberta was killed while trying to stop some people from stealing his truck.

Dawson Wegner Cramer, known as D.J., was found injured early Wednesday in an alley behind his Red Deer home.

The 23-year-old died in hospital.

Mounties say Cramer had tried to stop two men from taking his 2001 Ford F-650, a large commercial or cargo truck, when he was struck by the vehicle.

The truck was later found about three kilometres away, where witnesses spotted two suspects running into a wood-



Dawson Wegner Cramer's Ford F-650. THE CANADIAN PRESS

ed area.

Cpl. Hal Turnbull says investigators are trying to determine whether it was a random crime.

"Was it just a crime of oppor-

tunity — saw a truck and decided to get it and he got in the way. Or was it people he knew?" Turnbull said. "We don't know."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Night parade is here

GLOW

Festival of lanterns winds through Boyle Street plaza



Samantha Power
For Metro

GLOW, a night parade in The Quarters, takes place Saturday at 7:30 p.m. We got in touch with Lori Gawryluik, artistic director at Quarters Arts.

How did the idea of a night parade come together?

We were approached by Lynette Maurice and Cindi Zuby, who have co-ordinated the lantern parade at the Folk Music Festival, to do an Edmonton-focused celebration. Many cities around the world run successful lantern parades. One in Vancouver had too many people, so many it had to be shut down. We thought it would be a good fit for Boyle Street



Cohen and Ian work on lanterns for this weekend's festival.

CHAD STEEVES/FOR METRO

to welcome people to the community. All of this is quite new to Edmonton. But it will be a yearly event.

You've hosted community workshops throughout the month. How have those worked to bring people in?

We have Mother Teresa School participating. Students have made individual lanterns and contributed to a 20-foot dragon. It's quite a thing to see. There have been drop-in sessions at Bissel and Boyle Street. We've had people over from

iHuman and the Benevolent youth group.

What is the planned route for the parade?

There's a route through the plaza. We weren't sure of the turnout, but the plaza is so large we wanted to take advantage of the space. We managed to get the lights shut off around the plaza. And then people were really interested in doing miniature lantern walks throughout the community. Which is something I didn't expect.

How is this a uniquely Edmonton and Quarters project?

This desire to go exploring in smaller groups and take the parade up toward other areas in the city. It's neat how things are breaking out into other groups. We'd love to see it expand in future years to places like McCauley, Church Street, Riverdale, Parkdale and Cromdale to participate and the communities come together and enjoy this great facility we have here that is for all.

GOING OUT

Cat show, Irish theatre and more

ALL WEEKEND

The Edmonton Cat Show at the Italian Cultural Centre, Saturday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sunday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Cats are more popular today than ever. Celebrate their majesty and watch them as they're judged by experts at the Edmonton Cat Show.

Admission \$10, kids under six are free.

FRIDAY

Serca Festival at the Alberta Avenue Community Centre, 9210 118 Ave.

Celebrating the Irish requires more than one day. Friday night at the Serca Festival of Irish Theatre features Airswimming, the story of two women incarcerated and abandoned for having illegitimate children. Later, The Good Thief is the story of a Dublin lowlife working as a gangster.

Admission by donation.

SATURDAY

Fractions at SNAP, 10123 121 St. Gallery open noon-5 p.m.

Time slips away at the SNAP gallery with Belgian artist

Ingrid Ledent's exhibit. The lithographic prints are layered and combined with video and sound to represent the change of time. SNAP also features local artist Dara Huminiski's Nothing But Us.

GLOW by Quarters Arts, Boyle Street Plaza, 9538-103A Ave., 7:30 p.m., all ages.

Fancy an illuminated night parade? Lanterns have been constructed by the community under the direction of artists Lynette Maurice and Cindi Zuby. Individual lanterns and a 20-foot dragon will be out for a stroll.

SUNDAY

The Smalls: Forever is a long time, Metro Cinema at the Garneau Theatre, 8712 109 St., 9:30 p.m.

Did you miss The Smalls reunion? I'm sorry. But director Trevor Smith can help you out at the Metro this week. His documentary follows the band's last tour 13 years after disbanding. The film takes a look at the end of one of Edmonton's most successful bands. SAMANTHA POWER/FOR METRO

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OTTAWA

RCMP tragedy on Parliament Hill

Emma Jackson
Lucy Scholey
Metro | Ottawa

An RCMP officer has died after apparently shooting himself Thursday morning in a Sparks Street building just steps from Parliament Hill and less than a block away from the prime minister's Langevin Block office, sources say.

Ottawa police — who have yet to confirm those details — said

their officers rushed to the scene for a "medical call."

Const. Marc Soucy said the call came in at 8:55 a.m. for an emergency at 90 Sparks St., the Thomas D'Arcy McGee Building. He would only say a person had been taken to hospital.

Up to 10 police vehicles were positioned around the building, which borders Metcalfe, Queen and Sparks streets.

The RCMP later tweeted the

force had lost one of its own.

Paramedics spokesperson JP Trotter said his team "responded to a call near that area earlier this morning" and a person was taken to hospital.

He wouldn't comment on the person's injuries, saying the investigation is in the hands of the police.

Police also cordoned off the Metcalfe side of the building, at number 33.

An investigator took photos of

the side entrance and an RCMP vehicle that was parked on scene. Eventually, a tow truck picked up that car.

Ottawa Police Chief Charles Bordeleau pulled up on the Metcalfe side of the building in a white SUV.

He got out and shook hands with the two RCMP officers and OPS officer before driving off without speaking to the media.

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS



Lefty, who is homeless, sits on a sidewalk in Thunder Bay this month. He joins other homeless people at Shelter House for meals and a bed. PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Housing vows good: Minister

POVERTY

Census on homelessness a reminder of campaign

The federal Liberals have no interest in backing away from an election promise to spend more on affordable housing, says Status of Women Minister Patty Hajdu.

As communities across Canada engage in the first-ever federally organized and detailed census of homelessness, pressure on the government to act is mounting as community leaders better understand the stubbornness of the problem.

The Liberals have vowed to spend \$20 billion over the next 10 years on what the party calls "social" infrastructure, which includes shelters and affordable housing, as part of a broader commitment to infrastructure spending that was a central component of the party's election platform.

The details of how much the government will spend in the sector next year will be outlined in next week's budget.

The promised money has raised hopes that places like Thunder Bay, which Hajdu represents, will turn the corner on a chronic battle with poverty and homelessness. The homeless count revealed 17 homeless people died there last year.

Hajdu says the money should begin to cut long waiting lists for

\$1.7 billion

The campaign promise made by the Liberals before their election to government, for social infrastructure such as shelters and affordable housing.

affordable housing.

"And those waiting lists as they reduce, will alleviate the incredible burden on all of these largely not-for-profit organizations that are making do with a partial funding model of government money and fundraising money and donations," Hajdu said in a recent interview.

Next week's budget, the first for the Liberals since they took office after the October election, is expected to detail how much of the extra infrastructure money will be available to communities and how they can use it. The Liberals' campaign promise was for an extra \$5.1 billion in infrastructure spending this year. THE CANADIAN PRESS



The men's dorm at Shelter House in Thunder Bay, Ont. PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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RETIREMENT AGE

Canada sticking to 65

Canada will keep its retirement age at 65, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says.

The Stephen Harper Conservative government had planned to raise the retirement age to 67, but Trudeau said that this won't be happening in next week's budget.

"Tweaking the age like that is a very simplistic solution — that won't work — to a complex problem," Trudeau said on Thursday morning in a question and answer interview with Bloomberg News in New York.

Trudeau said he prefers a "nuanced and responsible discussion" about retirement, arguing that investment bankers and lawyers don't put their bodies through the same physical strains as manual labourers. He defended his plans to invest in the middle class and said he's not worried about driving the wealthy out of the country.

"We have nothing against success in Canada," Trudeau said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



Tweaking the age like that is a very simplistic solution — that won't work — to a complex problem.

Prime Minister Trudeau

Trudeau tricky on Trump

NEW YORK

PM deftly skates around offering a real opinion of The Donald

Americans got to witness a Canadian visitor this week immersed in an activity his nation prides itself on having mastered: stick-handling. The person performing the pivots was Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

The subject he repeatedly skated around: Donald Trump.

The prime minister was asked repeatedly during his visit to New York this week and in Washington last week what he thinks of the Trump phenomenon. He has answered each time without specifically mentioning the billionaire's name.

"I have tremendous confidence in Americans' capacity to get the right result through their electoral system," he said Thursday, echoing previous responses.

Later, he alluded to the U.S. election before a high-powered crowd. After receiving an award from a women's group at the Waldorf Astoria hotel, he said the reason he was able to introduce progressive policies like a gender-parity cabinet and welcome refugees was because his approach had won with voters.

"As much as I was able to do, and my government was able to do, we only did it because Canadians made a choice: to choose a more open, fair, positive way of doing politics," he told the ballroom crowd, which included the heads of McDonald's, Campbell Soup, Shell, and



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau takes part in an interview at Bloomberg headquarters in New York. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

the Carnival Corp.

He added, dryly: "That is certainly something that I hope resonates through political systems around the world."

That last line prompted laughter and perhaps his loudest applause of the evening — louder even than his references to the gender-parity cabinet, which is why he was invited to the gala and given the award from the women's group Catalyst.

Amid the claps, he added: "I'm not thinking of any place in particular!"

Several former Canadian ambassadors to the U.S. have publicly warned the prime minister not to talk about the U.S. elec-

tion, saying it would be a mistake to turn Canada into an issue in a messy election.

Trudeau's appearances before heading home later Thursday included an interview at Bloomberg, owned by Trump critic and former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg. Bloomberg wrote a laudatory piece about Trudeau this week headlined, Canada's New Hope.

There, he was asked again about what he would do if Trump becomes president. Trudeau replied that he understood why people were angry in many countries about the current political and economic systems and explained that he's working on

democratic reforms and economic policies aimed at empowering frustrated voters.

With respect to a president Trump, he said he'd work on areas where they shared common ground. The interviewer pressed him — what possible common ground could the Canadian progressive find with an American Republican talking about walls and ripping up trade deals and banning Muslim visitors to the U.S.?

Trudeau replied: "A desire to see Americans do well. A desire to see citizens in our countries to have better jobs and greater opportunities."

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump addresses a press conference on March 15. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



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Cuban President Fidel Castro and Pierre and Margaret Trudeau look over a photo album during the Trudeau's 1976 state visit to Cuba. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE



Cuban President Fidel Castro, right, listens to former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, left, during the memorial service for former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. AFP FILE PHOTO

Cuba, U.S. and Canada in between

The coming week is historic for Cubans and Americans, starting with U.S. President Barack Obama's two-day visit to Havana on Monday and Tuesday — the first by a U.S. president since 1928. It ends with a free, open-air concert by the Rolling Stones on Friday.

Spotlight on **CUBA**

Stephen Kimber



In the spring of 2013, U.S. and Cuban negotiators needed a neutral location for secret talks that would lead — 18 months later — to the stunning Dec. 17, 2014, announcement the world's two "closest of enemies" were re-establishing relations. The only thing they could agree on initially, however, was that those talks should take place in friendly-with-both Canada.

Now, ahead of U.S. President

Barack Obama's historic visit to Cuba, it's worth asking what the fast-evolving relationship between Washington and Havana — which we helped, in our modest way, to facilitate — will mean for the future of our own historic ties with Cuba.

After Fidel Castro's revolution triumphed in 1959, Canada was one of the few Western nations to maintain diplomatic relations with Cuba. In 1976, then-Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau became the first NATO leader to visit.

For Canada, that visit became a symbolic moment in our quest for an elusive, independent "third-way" foreign policy, untethered to the

United States or Great Britain. For Cuba, it was an important symbolic moment too — international recognition of its legitimate place in the world. "Viva Cuba!" Trudeau declared.

The visit had another far-reaching consequence too. Trudeau and Castro became such warm personal friends that, in 2000, the Cuban leader — by then ailing himself — flew to Montreal to serve as an honorary pallbearer at Trudeau's state funeral.

Although relations cooled during the Harper era — the Conservative government opposed Cuba's mere presence at events like the Summit of the Americas — the Cubans

did not easily forget Canada had been its friend when others were not. In 2010, during Canada's unsuccessful bid for a seat on the UN Security Council, Cuban diplomats even openly lobbied on our behalf with their Latin American counterparts.

Thanks to the 55-year-old American embargo, which has effectively prevented Americans from trading with — or travelling to — Cuba, and to the 1990s collapse of Cuba's Soviet Bloc benefactors, Canada has had unparalleled access to the Caribbean island nation.

Calgary's Sherritt International — which boasts min-



You can trust Canada.

Cuban Ambassador
Pedro Nunez Mosquera, in 2010

ing, oil-and-gas and electricity interests there — is now Cuba's largest foreign investor. And the million sun-seeking Canadians who fly south every winter to enjoy the island's spectacular beaches currently represent Cuba's largest source of foreign tourists. Cuba even hosts the largest Terry Fox run for cancer research in the world outside Canada.

With American businesses and individuals eager — and increasingly able — to share Cuba's long-forbidden fruit, Canada's role in Cuba will

inevitably diminish. But it's worth reminding ourselves of that sweet 2010 moment at the United Nations when Cuba unexpectedly stood up for us. "You can trust Canada," said Cuba's Ambassador Pedro Nunez Mosquera.

Cubans do have long memories, and they won't forget who their friends have been.

Stephen Kimber is the author of nine books, including *What Lies Across the Water: The Real Story of the Cuban Five*, and a columnist at Metro Halifax

TRADE

Cuba nixing penalty on U.S. currency

Cuba's government said Thursday it plans to do away with a penalty on converting U.S. dollars, but warned the Obama administration not to expect more changes until the U.S. trade embargo is lifted.

Three days before President Barack Obama visits the island, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez dismissed Obama's lofty rhetoric about using his visit to speak directly to the Cuban people about their future. In a stern and lengthy speech in Havana, he put Obama on notice that any attempt to circumvent the Cuban government by lob-

bing Cubans directly would not be warmly received.

"Various U.S. officials have declared in recent hours that the objective of Obama's measures is empowering the Cuban people. The Cuban people empowered themselves decades ago," Rodriguez said, referring to the 1959 revolution that put the current Cuban government in power.

Of Obama's talk about engaging directly with Cubans, he added, "It's a nonsense approach."

Still, Rodriguez laid out a scenario under which the 10

per cent penalty on dollars exchanged at banks and money-changers in Cuba would soon be lifted, making it easier and cheaper for Americans to spend time in Cuba.

Earlier this week the U.S. lifted a ban on Cuban access to the international banking system, a longstanding Cuban demand. Rodriguez told reporters in the Cuban capital that Cuba will attempt a series of international transactions in coming days. If they work, Cuba will eliminate the 10 per cent penalty.

The tough talk from the Cuban government came as

90

Obama hopes to use his trip to Cuba — the first by a sitting president in nearly 90 years — to lock in as much progress as possible between the U.S. and Cuba before he leaves office.

Obama prepared for a history-making trip to Havana aimed at cementing the normalization in relations that he and Cuban President Raul Castro began.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Cuban children play baseball in Havana. AFP/GETTY IMAGES.

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REFUGEE CRISIS

EU close to migrant deal with Turkey

European leaders struggled Thursday to reach a deal that balanced their concerns about legal protections for refugees and Turkey's human rights record with their desperate need to resolve the migrant crisis.

On the table was a tentative plan to send back to Turkey tens of thousands of would-be asylum seekers who set out by boat for the Greek islands, in exchange for concessions that would reward Ankara with billions of dollars in aid, unprecedented visa access to Europe and promises of faster European Union membership talks.

Human rights groups and leading EU legislators decried the plan as a cynical cave-in, sacrificing universal rights to pander to a restless electorate fed up with hosting people who are fleeing war and poverty.

Even some leaders acknowledged the EU was walking a tightrope.

"It is on the edge of international law," Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė said of the outline deal that the 28-nation bloc hopes to sign off on before putting it up for approval to Turkey on Friday.

Some also criticized Tur-

**“
(The outline deal)
is on the edge of
international law.”**

Lithuanian President
Dalia Grybauskaitė

key, which hosts 2.7 million refugees, complaining it was cynically trying to exploit the situation to win concessions well beyond its reach under normal circumstances.

"Turkey is really asking for a lot. I refuse to accept negotiations that sometimes resemble a form of blackmail," said Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel.

Desperate to plug a yawning border hole that has seen more than 1 million people arrive in Europe in search of sanctuary or jobs, EU leaders have been increasingly looking to outsource management of the influx to Turkey.

They see the deal with Turkey as a way to halt the flow by land and sea, especially as the weather turns warmer, and prevent people from turning to unscrupulous smugglers.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Yazidis, their family displaced by ISIS attacks, stand in their temporary home in Zakho, northern Iraq. The Obama administration formally said that ISIL is committing genocide against Yazidis, Christians and other minorities. GETTY IMAGES

U.S. denounces ISIL attacks as genocide

MIDDLE EAST

Declaration made official by congressional deadline

The Obama administration on Thursday formally concluded the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is committing genocide against Christians and other minorities in Iraq and Syria, a declaration long sought by Congress and human rights organizations but likely to change little in the conflict against the extremists.

The determination, for which Congress had set a Thursday deadline, does not obligate the United States to take additional action against ISIL militants and does not prejudice any potential prosecution against its members.

Officials said the U.S. has already intensified its fight against ISIL and had effectively recognized the situation as a genocide more than a year ago when it agreed to increase the number of refugees, notably from Syria, that America accepts.

A day after the State Department said the administration would miss the deadline because it needed more evidence, Kerry said Thursday that he had com-

pleted his review after all and determined that Christians, Yazidis and Shiite groups are victims of genocide and crimes against humanity by the Islamic State.

The House earlier this week unanimously passed a nonbinding resolution condemning ISIL atrocities as genocide.

Kerry outlined a litany of atrocities that he said the militants had committed against people and religious sites, as well as threats to eradicate what it terms apostates and infidels.

Using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group, he said, "Daesh (ISIL) is genocidal by self-proclamation, by ideology, and by actions - in what it



U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry speaks. J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

says, what it believes and what it does."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

First Puerto Rican woman with Zika has healthy baby

Officials in Puerto Rico say the first pregnant woman on the island infected with Zika has given birth to a healthy baby. Health Department spokeswoman Jillian Oliveras said Thursday that both are in good health. The mosquito-borne virus has been linked to microcephaly, which causes babies to be born with unusually small heads. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

France recreates terror attacks to prevent more

French lawmakers leading an investigation into the deadly Nov. 13 attacks in Paris and some first responders at the Bataclan concert hall that night staged a re-enactment Thursday of the horror that left 130 people dead across the capital.

The exercises aim to prevent future violence and shed light on what happened on Nov. 13. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Lebanese men play cards and smoke water pipe, as they sunbathe during unusually warm weather at the Mediterranean. Earth got so hot last month that federal scientists struggled to find words to describe it. **HUSSEIN MALLA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Heat: Not just El Nino

CLIMATE CHANGE

Scientists find new record temperatures 'strange'

Earth got so hot last month that federal scientists struggled to find words, describing temperatures as "astronomical," "staggering" and "strange." They warned that the climate may have moved into a new and hotter neighbourhood.

This was not just another of the drumbeat of 10 straight broken monthly global heat records, triggered by a super El Nino and man-made global warming. February 2016 obliterated old marks by such a margin that it was the most above-normal month since meteorologists started keeping track in 1880, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

NOAA said Earth averaged 56.08 degrees Fahrenheit (13.38 degrees Celsius) in February, 2.18 degrees (1.21 degrees Celsius)

above average, beating the old record for February set in 2015 by nearly six-tenths of a degree (one-third of a degree Celsius).

The old record was set just last December and the last three months have been the most above-normal months on record, said NOAA climate scientist Jessica Blunden. And it's not just NOAA. NASA, which uses different statistical techniques, as well as a University of Alabama Huntsville team and the private Remote Sensing System team, which measure using satellites, also said February 2016 had the biggest departure from normal on record. These were figures that had federal scientists grasping for superlatives.

"The departures are what we would consider astronomical," Blunden said. "It's on land. It's in the oceans. It's in the upper atmosphere. It's in the lower atmosphere. The Arctic had record low sea ice."

"Everything everywhere is a record this month, except Antarctica," Blunden said. "It's insane."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Guinea reports two Ebola cases Thursday

Guinea says two people have tested positive for Ebola, after the country was declared free of the virus. Ibrahima Sylla, spokesman for the national co-ordination for the fight against Ebola, said there may be three other cases. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Uber lawsuit a hoax: Police

A lawsuit against Uber filed in the name of Jason Dalton, a driver accused of gunning down six people, is a hoax, authorities say. Kalamazoo County police said Dalton, who is jailed, denied filing the lawsuit. They have referred the matter to the FBI. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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Pet clothing sales feel chill of milder winter

RETAIL

Companies forced to lay off employees and cut prices

An unseasonably warm winter in Eastern Canada and a weak economy have taken a big bite out of sales from businesses that cater to furry best friends, the pet products industry says.

"For us, it's a big hurt," said Marianne Bertrand, owner of Mutluks. The Toronto-based company estimates that sales of doggie coats and boots have slipped by more than 30 per cent this winter.

Mutluks, whose boots were recently given to U.S. President Barack Obama's dogs by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau during his state visit, was forced to lay off about a dozen employees when it prematurely shut production late last year.

Montreal pet store Doghaus said the warm winter prompted it to slash its prices in half and it plans to offer even deeper discounts to help clear inventory. "It wasn't a wasteland or anything, but it definitely was lighter than other years," said manager Sarah Miller-Barrington.

Industry surveys have suggested that most pet owners are willing to spend extra for the best products available, including food, even if they are more expensive.



Sarah and her dog Fergus in the Doghaus pet supply store in Montreal. An unseasonably warm winter in Eastern Canada and a weak economy have taken a big bite out of sales from businesses that cater to furry best friends, the pet products industry says. PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

\$7 billion

What the pet business is worth annually, including food, clothing, accessories and trips to the vet, according to the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council of Canada.

Like many of her customers, Miller-Barrington says she tends to "mother" her eight-year-old Shetland Sheepdog named Fergus, even though

his heavy fur coat protects him from the elements.

Just as parents outfit their children for the cold, many people feel the same obligation to their pets, she added. Others simply view it as an opportunity to make a fashion statement by finding a fun new dog coat each year.

K9 Excel owner Johanne Beaulieu said she hasn't seen this level of sales decline in the six years she's operated the Montreal store and website, which sells clothes, boots, and dog diapers.

Buyers aren't just the wealthy — they come from all walks of life, Beaulieu said. "It's people for whom an animal is their baby," she said.

A weaker economy, especially in Western Canada, has also contributed to diminished sales of pet products, says Louis McCann, CEO of the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council of Canada. Clothing and boots are highly dependent on weather but the health of the economy plays a more important role in purchasing decisions, he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

SHARING ECONOMY

B.C. hot spot cracks down on Airbnb



Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

One of B.C.'s hottest tourism destinations plans to crack down on unlicensed nightly home rentals on websites such as Airbnb in a bid to improve affordability and housing availability for long-term residents.

District of Tofino councillors voted this week to immediately educate people about and enforce regulations surrounding bed and breakfasts and short-term rentals, which have flourished since Airbnb entered the scene two to three years ago. During the same time, rents went up and long-term rentals became harder to find, according to the motion by Tofino Mayor Josie Osborne.

Home rentals have been allowed in Tofino for a decade if the owner gets a business licence — these cost up to \$375 — but this rule is often ignored and is only enforced on a complaint basis, Osborne said.

Council is concerned Airbnb listings take apartments off the

market for seasonal tourism workers in the hot spot that was featured in the New York Times twice last year.

In focus groups conducted by the district, they found that short-term rentals are "critical" for property owners to be able to afford to buy in Tofino in the first place. Tofino's population was 1,876 in the 2011 census.

But anecdotal evidence has made council suspicious that the conversion of long-term rentals to short-term rentals is leading to evictions and higher rents, Osborne said.

Vancouver is expecting staff to report back this fall on how to handle Airbnb, Coun. Geoff Meggs said. "The priority concern is it could be soaking up rental housing," he said, adding public safety is also a concern.



The concern is it could be soaking up rental housing.

Coun. Geoff Meggs

IMPORTS

Liberals under pressure to raise duty-exempt limit

With its maiden budget just days away, the new Liberal government is facing pressure to bump up Canada's duty-exemption limit from its current level of \$20 for products shipped or mailed from abroad.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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MAPLE SYRUP

Weather creates sticky situation for Canada's producers

Many Canadians have been enjoying an unseasonably warm winter, but the balmy weather could spell trouble for maple syrup producers.

El Nino usually has a negative impact on harvesting and production of maple syrup, said Sylvain Charlebois, a professor at the Food Institute at the University of Guelph.

"It wouldn't be surprising to see 2016 as being a very bad year ... as a result of the warmer weather we've been having," said Charlebois. "I would say El Nino is affecting most if not all of the regions where maple syrup production is predominant." Those regions include Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and

American states like Vermont and New York.

A mix of colder, sub-zero nights and warmer days above freezing are ideal syrup-producing conditions.

The Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers, which has about 7,300 members, said the season is a few days earlier than usual in parts of the

province. In contrast, the past two years have seen late starts.

Federation spokeswoman Caroline Cyr said the past five or six years have been "really, really good" while 2006 and '07 were poor.

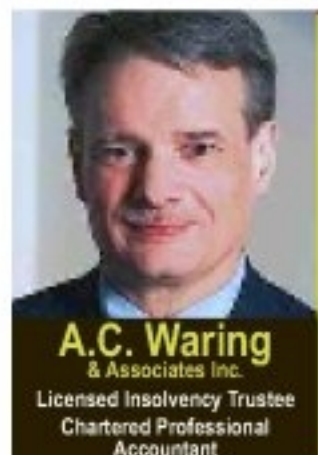
Charlebois said a poor season will put pressure on current supplies and may push prices higher next year.

"I suspect that next year prices will go up and how much it's hard to tell, but usually when you're dealing with a luxury product where demand really is, in Quebec in particular, an elastic you're likely going to see prices increase by as much as perhaps 10 or 15 per cent," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



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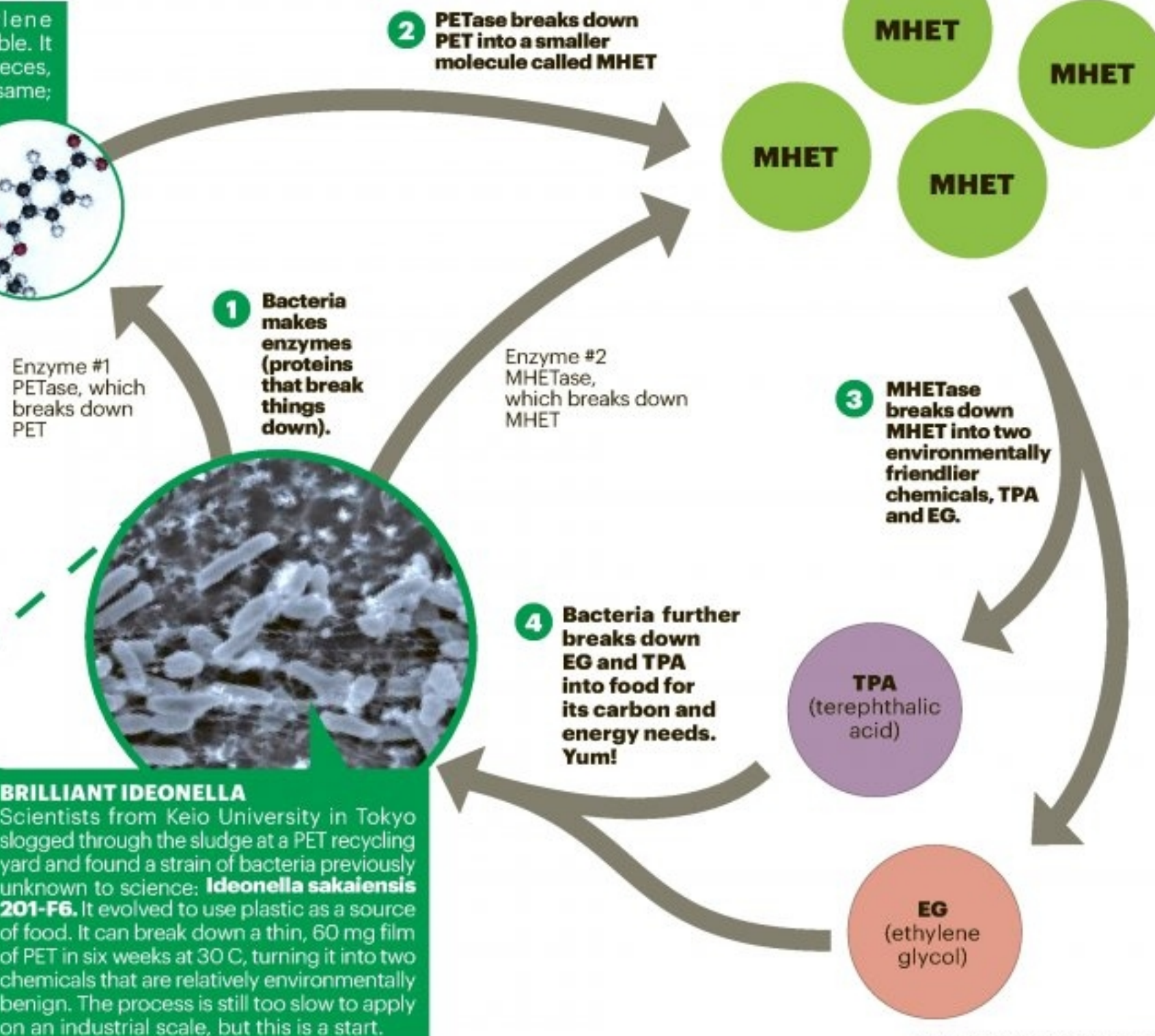
READ MY LIPS
A new technique makes it easier to pinpoint unique chemicals in common lipstick brands — so don't leave a kiss at a crime scene.

DECODED Biological recycling

MICROSCOPIC MEALTIME

Did you crack a bottled soft drink today? Chances are it was made of PET, a super-durable plastic made from crude oil. Unlike organic waste, PET doesn't get broken down by bacteria (biodegraded) in the environment — at least, we didn't think so. Scientists have discovered a bacteria species that eats PET for lunch, and, with it, a potential way to **tackle one of the most perplexing pollution problems of our time.**

PET: PUBLIC ENEMY Poly(ethylene terephthalate), or PET, is incredibly stable. It breaks down into tiny, confetti-like pieces, but its chemical properties remain the same; it's still plastic. Birds eat it, fish eat it, and it collects in vast islands in the ocean. Only a fraction of the 53 million tonnes made per year gets recycled.



BRILLIANT IDEONELLA
Scientists from Keio University in Tokyo slogged through the sludge at a PET recycling yard and found a strain of bacteria previously unknown to science: *Ideonella sakaiensis* 201-F6. It evolved to use plastic as a source of food. It can break down a thin, 60 mg film of PET in six weeks at 30 C, turning it into two chemicals that are relatively environmentally benign. The process is still too slow to apply on an industrial scale, but this is a start.

GRAPHICS BY ANDRÉS PLANA/METRO

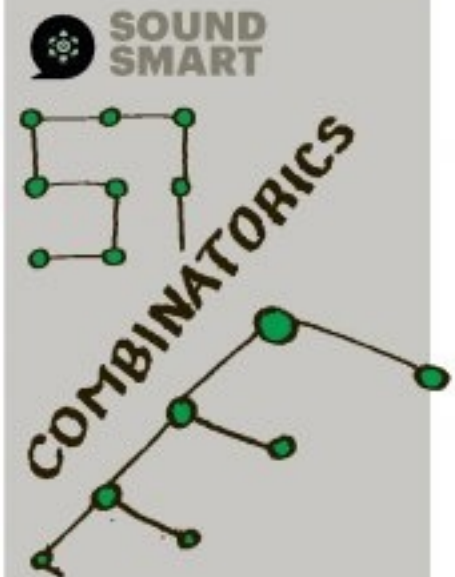
FINDINGS

Your week in science

Dengue vaccine
Doctors at Johns Hopkins University have announced a 100-per-cent successful clinical trial of a vaccine for dengue, one of the most common — and most feared — mosquito-borne diseases on Earth. (It's not called "bone-break fever" for no reason).

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CITIZEN SCIENTIST by Genna Buck

Do chimpanzees believe in God?

QUESTION
Whoa. Chimps build shrines? Does this mean humans aren't the only species with religion? — Colin, Toronto

You know, Colin, it wouldn't surprise me. Chimpanzees have been observed using tools, warring among rival groups and dancing in the rain. They're known to practise a sort of communal chilling-out after meals that's been compared to gathering for worship. However, I don't think

there's conclusive evidence of chimp spirituality in the recent Nature paper you're talking about. It describes chimps caught on camera repeatedly and deliberately hurling rocks at trees and leaving distinctive stone piles (shrines?) around the forest. It didn't seem to be a mating ritual. It wasn't about food. There was no obvious evolutionary reason for it at all. The authors suggested it *could* be symbolic, or even sacred. But very careful further study is needed, I think, be-

cause researchers have to fight the tendency we all have to *anthropomorphize*, or ascribe human characteristics to non-humans. It's one of our powerful cognitive biases (in-born patterns of flawed reasoning). That said, this study made me think of a conference I went to where psychiatrist Martin Brüne presented findings about a possible PTSD-like syndrome in chimpanzees. Brüne showed a video of a retired research chimp curled into a ball, rocking back and

forth and hitting himself, much like I'd once seen a child with autism do, mid-tantrum. It looked eerily human. The moderator said chimps continually exceeded his expectations: He always found they were more smart, more complex and more self-aware than he'd thought. So I'd be open to the idea that our closest living relatives are into human-like things, such as prayer. But we need to see more evidence first.



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Where are all the movie stars?

ANALYSIS

Marketing trumps man in today's big studio films

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada



Where have all the movie stars gone?

Once upon a time big names on even bigger marquees were as close to a guarantee of good box office as one gets in the movie biz. But no more.

This weekend *The Divergent Series: Allegiant*, the third part of the young adult series, hit theatres. Based on the successful books, it stars Shailene Woodley and Theo James in a teen epic about dystopia, guilt and artfully tossed pixie haircuts.

In the new film the pair risk it all to go beyond the walls of their shattered city to discover the truth about their troubled world.

Woodley and James are appealing performers and despite having chiselled cheekbones and earning accolades (they won the Teen Choice Award for best liplock in *Insurgent* and Woodley was a Golden Globe nominee for *The Descendants*), no one is going to see *Allegiant* because they're in it.

Why? Because they're not movie stars — they're brand ambassadors.

The movie's brand is big-

ger than they are and that's the draw.

Young adult movies like *Twilight* made Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart famous and superhero films reignited Robert Downey Jr.'s career and turned Chris Hemsworth into a sex symbol, but none of these actors have scored recent hits outside of their best-known brands.

These days the marketing is more important than the movie star.

It's almost a throwback to the very early days of cinema when actors weren't given billing or publicized for the films they made.

Fearing performers would demand larger paycheques if they became popular, the studios gave them nicknames instead.

Hamilton, Ont.-born Florence Lawrence was known as the Biograph Girl, named after the studio that produced her films, but with the release of *The Broken Oath* in 1910 became the first entertainer to have her name appear in the credits of a film.

Floodgates opened, soon names like Mary Pickford (another Biograph Girl), Douglas Fairbanks and Charlie Chaplin festooned not only movie credits but posters as well, usually above the title.

The studios seized the marketing value of their actors and for years the star system was a money-spinner.

These stars were so powerful they not only sold tickets by the fistful but also influenced contemporary trends.

For instance, it's rumoured



The Divergent Series is proof you don't need big names if you've got a big brand. CONTRIBUTED

MOVIE RATINGS by Richard Crouse

The Divergent Series: Allegiant Part 1 ★★
The Program ★★
Chi-Raq ★★★★★
Knight of Cups ★

HOW RATING WORKS
 ★★★★★ SEE IT
 ★★★★★ WORTHWHILE
 ★★ UP TO YOU
 ★ SKIP IT

that sales of men's undershirts plummeted in 1934 when *The King of Hollywood*, Clark Gable, was seen without one in *It Happened One Night*.

As the legend goes, sales took such a hit several under-

wear manufacturers tried, unsuccessfully, to sue Columbia Pictures for damages.

For decades stars ruled supreme at the box office, but the business has changed. I'm guessing the movie studios

love it because no film brand ever asked for more money or a bigger trailer.

Certainly Tom Cruise can still sell a ticket or three, but only if his movie has the words *Mission Impossible* in the title and Matt Damon was brought back in to add star sparkle to the new *Jason Bourne* movie after a lackluster reboot with Jeremy Renner. Jennifer Lawrence is a movie star. Her latest film *Joy*, the empowering story of a woman and her mop, wasn't a big hit but without her star power would likely

never have been made at all.

But former sure bets like Will Smith, Johnny Depp and Angelina Jolie cannot always be counted on for big returns.

It's not just the movie business's attitude toward fame that has changed, it's also ours.

Today a proliferation of YouTube superstars and social media has democratized fame and in a world and business where everyone is famous, no one truly is, not even the stars of a blockbuster such as *The Divergent Series: Allegiant*.

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On being a nerd and indie film roles

DIVERGENT

Zoe Kravitz talks musical theatre and her acting gigs

Ned Ehrbar
Metro | Hollywood



Zoe Kravitz is gearing up for one more Divergent film after this latest instalment, *Allegiant*, hits theatres. But she might be able to squeeze in another hip indie — like last year's *Dope* — before heading back to finish off the YA dystopian series.

You are three movies into a four-movie series. How do you approach this section?

Yeah, it's interesting, it's kind of like going home again. I feel like I know this character so well now that, I know how she reacts to things, I know how I want her to evolve. But then you read the script and you go, "OK, this is a moment. How do I make that part of her

come through?" I feel like that's where the work comes in.

What were some of those moments for this one?

I actually really enjoyed how quiet she is in this film. I think there was a lot of angst in her in the first film, but there was an immaturity there. Now so much has gone on, there's been real loss, real death, real killing, real revolution, so I think it's kind of shut her up in a really interesting way, where she's focused.

Do you know what happens going forward?

Yeah, I read the books, but I try not to dwell on it because once we've gotten the script that has got to be your focus, because you can't dwell on the things that aren't in there, you know what I mean? You're kind of like "OK, this is now what we're working with."

This is such a gigantic cast. Is there a lot of downtime?

I guess there's chunks of time where you're not work-



Shailene Woodley (Tris, left) and Zoë Kravitz (Christina) star in *The Divergent Series: Allegiant*. CONTRIBUTED

ing. But the thing is that for the most part, everyone's around, you know what I mean? So even though you're not featured in that scene, you're probably somewhere in the room because it's kind of focused on this group of people. So there's actually a lot of times of being in the

scene but just kind of being there because you'd be there. There's a lot of standing around, but on camera.

You go between these massive franchises and very interesting smaller films. How do you navigate that?

It's about if the story reflects

something that I feel like I haven't seen or want to see more of or want to be a part of. It doesn't really come down to, "OK, I'm gonna do a really cool indie film, and I'm gonna do a big franchise film," you know? *Mad Max*, I loved the story. *Divergent*, I loved the story. *Dope*, I loved

the story.

You've described yourself as a nerd. Why?

I'm a very nerdy person. Acting for me came from musical theatre, which some people might not think is nerdy. But it was not the coolest group of kids at school, it just never is. In all of the schools that I ever went to, that was my crew. I was in every play that I could get near and always singing in three-part harmony with my friends. I have that very campy part of myself. I was not the coolest kid in school, so I consider myself a nerd.

But nerds have really come into their own.

Yeah, I think people are beginning to not only accept but be intrigued by the less obvious things in life. It's not that we're less nerdy, we just don't care as much. Or people are not so quick to judge, hopefully. Nerds are more interesting, right? The reason you're considered a "nerd" is because you're not doing what everyone else is doing.

INTERVIEW

Divergent author loves meeting fans

Divergent author Veronica Roth won't have to travel far to attend this year's BookCon.

Roth is a native of Chicago, the setting for the third annual fan-based, pop-culture publishing event, the book world's version of Comic-Con. BookCon will be held May 14 at McCormick Place, with featured speakers also including Samantha Bee, Sherman Alexie and Richelle Mead.

"I'm fierce in my love for Chicago, and it's a great place for books, so hopefully my author peers are seduced by its wonderfulness and decide to move here," she wrote in a recent email interview.

As in previous years, BookCon immediately follows BookExpo America, the publishing industry's annual convention and trade show. Thousands of young people attended BookCon in 2014 and 2015 when the event was held in New York, and Roth said she was excited to meet some of her fans.

"For me, it's important to connect with the people who are reading my books, particularly the younger ones," she wrote. "It reminds me why it's important to write stories for them, and about them. They are wonderfully complex, enthusiastic people, and what they share with me in person ... is an essential part of what makes writing meaningful to me." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Veronica Roth attends the premiere of *Allegiant* in New York on Monday. Roth will attend the third annual fan-based, pop-culture publishing event, BookCon, on May 14 in Chicago. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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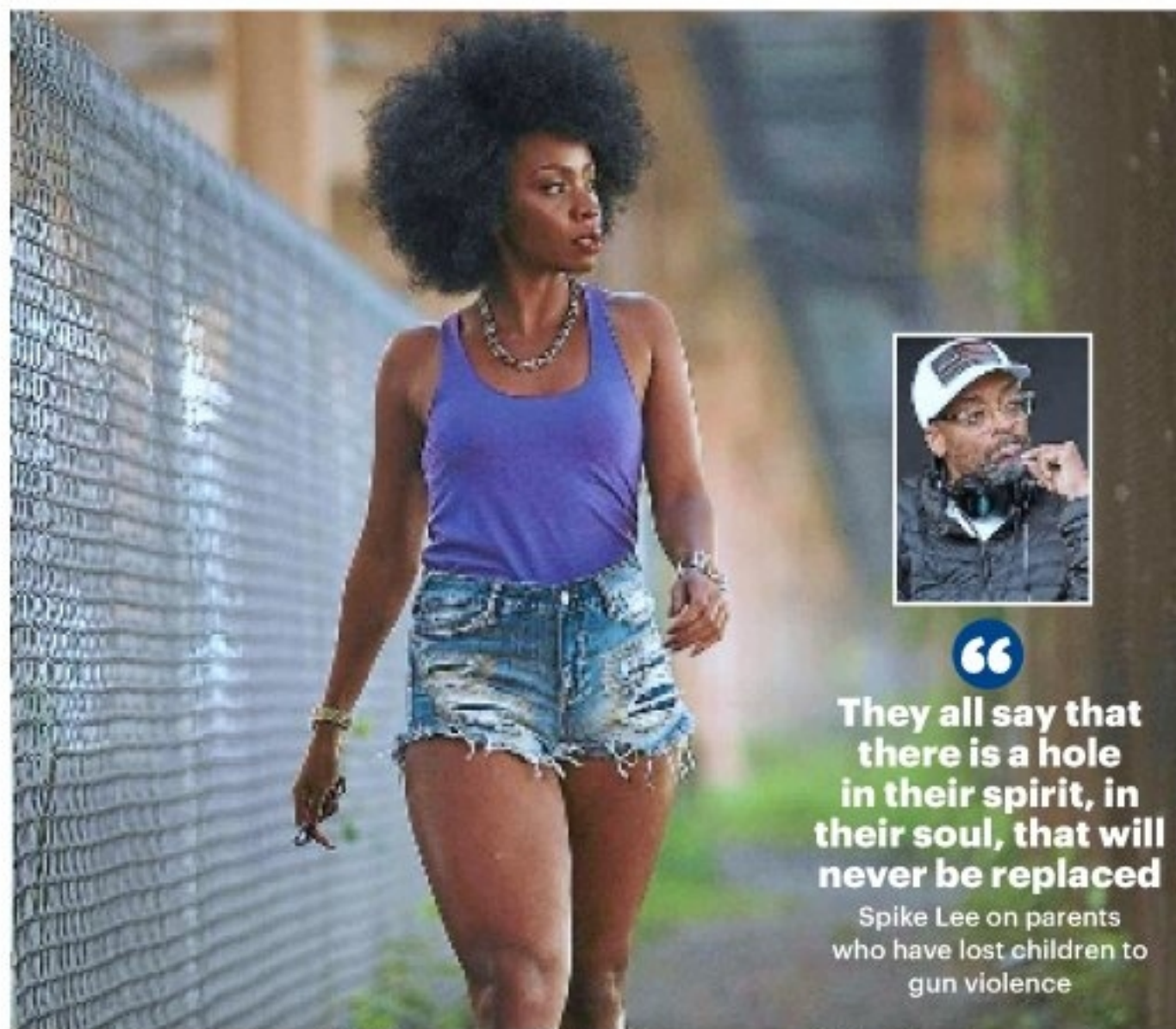
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Spike Lee's take on gang violence



“They all say that there is a hole in their spirit, in their soul, that will never be replaced

Spike Lee on parents who have lost children to gun violence

Lysistrata (Teyonah Parris) is the woman who leads the move to withhold sex from men in Chicago's South Side until the gun violence stops in Spike Lee's new joint Chi-Raq. CONTRIBUTED

INTERVIEW

Chi-Raq inspired by ancient Greek play

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada



“The human spirit is a great thing,” says director Spike Lee on what he learned while doing research for his new film. The director spent six months in South Side Chicago, “talking to people, meeting people, getting the lay of the land,” before shooting a single frame of his anti-gang-violence movie Chi-Raq. “It was very important, not just meeting people, but people becoming comfortable with me. People opening up to me.”

The movie draws its story about a neighbourhood woman who convinces the wives and girlfriends of gang members to withhold sex from their men until the guys agree to put down their weapons from a Greek play first performed in 411 BC,

but details the very modern problem of gun violence.

“At the end of the movie in that scene where everybody is dressed in white,” says Lee, “those women are not actresses. Those women are members of a group called Pain Over Purpose. They are mothers whose children, whose sons and daughters, have been shot down in the streets of Chicago. Those pictures they are holding up are pictures of their loved ones.”

“The pain of a parent who has lost a child in any circumstance is something that no parent should have to go through. They all say that there is a hole in their spirit, in their soul, that will never be replaced. Many of those mothers have tried to commit suicide and had various other problems since then but they are holding strong.”

The cycle of violence portrayed in the film and acted out for real on the streets — during Chi-Raq's 38-day filming schedule 331 people were wounded and shot, 65 people were murdered in Chicago — was personal for one of the movie's stars.

“Do you know Jennifer Hudson's history?” asks Lee. “It is

known knowledge that Jennifer's mother, brother and nephew were murdered in Chicago. I think that's extra gravitas that you have with Jennifer Hudson in this film. This is not an act for her. She got hit directly by gun violence on the South Side of Chicago.”

“I didn't want her to think that I was exploiting her. I knew I wanted her for the part but there was some length of time before I got the courage to approach her. Also, when we did meet I was babbling. She said, ‘Spike, I know why you want me to do this film, so just stop. I'll do it.’ I was trying to be sensitive and I turned out to just beat around the bush. I said, ‘I'll just shut up and say thank you.’”

Lee is fearless in his handling of the material, taking chances narratively — the entire film is presented in verse — and visually, to tell the timely and hot-button story of a “self-inflicted genocide.”

Finding the mix of heartfelt storytelling and satire, says Lee, was crucial to the success of the film.

“It is not an easy thing to do,” he says.

MEMORABILIA

Seinfeld-inspired sombrero goes on sale next week

Nearly 20 years after TV viewers were introduced to the urban sombrero, a Seinfeld star says he'll finally be selling the infamous hat to fans soon.

The brown head-topper, which looks like a cross between a sombrero and a Mountie hat (think Pharrell at the 2014 Grammys), was featured in a 1996 episode in which Elaine runs the J. Peterman retail company after her boss goes to Burma.

Elaine puts her idea for an urban sombrero on the cover of the catalogue but it ends up being a huge flop and sparks a backlash from those who bought it.

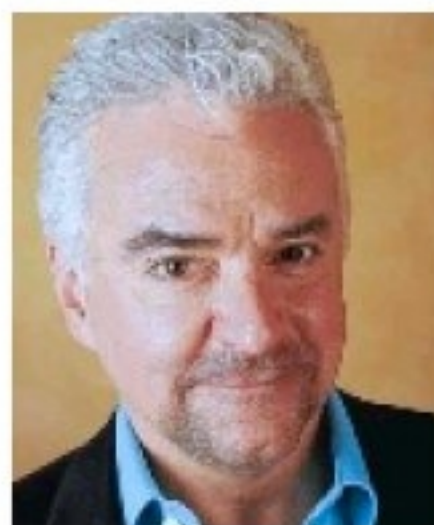
Actor John O'Hurley, who played the eccentric J. Peterman on the series, says the urban sombrero will go on sale next month as part of a six-week crowdfunding campaign, and hinted Seinfeld fans will also “be able to buy several things that are special.”

He says the urban sombrero will be sold through the real J. Peterman Company, which was first launched in 1987 and parodied by Seinfeld. After going bankrupt in 1999, the company was subsequently relaunched by the real John Peterman with O'Hurley as an investor.

“It's only taken me 20 years



The urban sombrero in a scene from Seinfeld. CONTRIBUTED



John O'Hurley played J. Peterman on Seinfeld.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

of screaming at (Peterman) to issue the urban sombrero,” says O'Hurley by phone recently to talk about his appearance at this weekend's Toronto ComiCon presented by Fan Expo Canada.

“It's going to be a big splash. I can't wait for it.... I think it's partly satisfying my ego, after many, many years of bickering with him.”

J. Peterman became famous for its novel catalogues that featured collections of products from around the world with elaborate written descriptions and illustrations instead of photos. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Actor defends Lance Armstrong

FALLEN SPORTS HERO

Ben Foster had to learn about doping culture for role in film

After enduring an intense exercise regime, secretly using performance-enhancing drugs, and immersing himself in the world of Lance Armstrong to portray the cyclist on the big screen, Ben Foster was left with one feeling for the controversial athlete.

"Empathy," said the actor. "It was a complicated time. He's a complicated man."

It's a feeling Foster hopes audiences can also come away with after watching *The Program*, which tracks Armstrong's incredible cycling career and the behind-the-scenes doping that drove it.

Armstrong, a cancer survivor and longtime athlete, was once an American sporting hero, but is now a divisive figure.

He has been banned from cycling for life and had his seven Tour de France titles stripped after telling Oprah Winfrey in a 2013 interview that he used performance-enhancing drugs.

Foster knew the bare-bones of Armstrong's story before making *The Program*, which was directed by British film-

maker Stephen Frears. But playing the athlete made him appreciate the broader culture of doping that existed in cycling at the time.

"He did doping better. He did nutrition better. He did the cycling gear better. He did training better. It's not about being a liar. If everybody's doping, everybody's lying," Foster said, noting that Armstrong also raised millions for cancer research over the course of his career.

"He treated people in a particular way that I don't necessarily agree with but the complexity of the good that he did, with the way that he did it, deserves a deeper consideration."

To properly capture Armstrong's intensity, Foster — unbeknownst to the rest of his cast, but under the supervision of a doctor — took performance-enhancing drugs himself and only revealed what he had done after filming had wrapped.

He also tried to reach out to Armstrong, but the athlete wasn't interested in talking. Foster nonetheless describes himself as a fan of Armstrong's, saying he found himself defending the cyclist on the set of the film.

"We don't like that Lance didn't apologize in a way that felt sincere. And that's why we're punishing him still," he said. "I don't condone or condemn ... I think it's a complicated story."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

ANOTHER TAKE

Lance fascinating person to watch, says O'Dowd

Chris O'Dowd, who plays David Walsh, an Irish journalist who worked to bring Armstrong's doping into the spotlight, agreed that the cyclist is a complex character and noted that the film attempts to provide a better picture of the intricacies of his world.

"He was an incredible athlete, very manipulative, vindictive, self-centred, very smart, and ego driven," he said. "I think he's a fascinating person to watch."

"I don't know if he needs our sympathy. I think he's a fallen hero, but still a kind of hero"

Chris O'Dowd

O'Dowd's personal feelings about Armstrong, however, tend to waver.

"At times I feel slightly sorry for him. But then I think of how he treated some people ... and I think, 'I don't know if he needs our sympathy,'" he said. "I think he's a fallen hero, but still a kind of hero."



Ben Foster stars as Lance Armstrong in *The Program* directed by Stephen Frears. CONTRIBUTED

"[Lance Armstrong] treated people in a particular way that I don't necessarily agree with but the complexity of the good that he did, with the way that he did it, deserves a deeper consideration."

Ben Foster on the controversial sports hero

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DRAMA
Miracles From Heaven
Director: Patricia Riggen
Starring: Jennifer Garner, Kylie Rogers

When Christy discovers her 10-year-old daughter Anna has an incurable disease, she becomes a ferocious advocate for her daughter's healing as she searches for a solution. After Anna has a freak accident, an extraordinary miracle unfolds.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: Audience:
64% 78%



ACTION
The Divergent Series: Allegiant
Director: Robert Schwentke
Starring: Shailene Woodley, Theo James

After the earth-shattering revelations of Insurgent, Tris (Shailene Woodley) must escape with Four (Theo James) and go beyond the wall enclosing Chicago. For the first time ever, they will leave the only city and family they have ever known.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: Audience:
18% +95%



DRAMA
The Program
Director: Stephen Frears
Starring: Ben Foster, Jesse Plemons

From Academy Award nominated director Stephen Frears (The Queen, Philomena) comes the true story of the meteoric rise and fall of one of the most celebrated and controversial men in recent history: Lance Armstrong.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: Audience:
62% +86%



DRAMA/MYSTERY
10 Cloverfield Lane
Director: Dan Trachtenberg
Starring: Mary Elizabeth Winstead, John Goodman

A young woman wakes up after an accident to find that she's locked in a cellar with a doomsday prepper who insists that he saved her life and the world outside is uninhabitable following an apocalyptic catastrophe.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: Audience:
90% 85%



DRAMA/COMEDY
The Bronze
Director: Bryan Buckley
Starring: Melissa Rauch, Gary Cole

A decade ago, Hope Ann Gregory (Melissa Rauch) was America's sweetheart. Her inspired performance on a ruptured Achilles at the world's most prestigious gymnastics tournament clinched an unlikely bronze medal for the U.S. team and brought glory to her hometown of Amherst, Ohio.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: Audience:
22% +63%



WESTERN
Forsaken
Director: Jon Cassar
Starring: Kiefer Sutherland, Donald Sutherland

In 1872, John Henry Clayton (Kiefer Sutherland) retires as a gunfighter and returns to his hometown of Fowler, Wyo. in hope of repairing his relationship with his estranged father, Rev. Clayton (Donald Sutherland). However, he soon learns that the town is in turmoil, as the railroad will be coming through the area.

ROTTEN TOMATOES™ SCORE
Critics: Audience:
44% 98%



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FAITH-BASED FILMS

Miracles From Heaven tones down religion, ups star power

For some filmgoers, hearing a movie described as "faith-based" makes it a must-see. But just as many others find the term a turn-off.

To reach audiences beyond the Christian church-goers that generally propel the genre, some producers of faith-based films are ramping up the star power and tamping down the evangelical messages.

The latest example is *Miracles From Heaven*, starring Jennifer Garner and Queen Latifah, which tells the true story of a nine-year-old Texas girl who inexplicably

recovers from an incurable condition after surviving a 30-foot fall.

Among the film's producers are pastors T.D. Jakes and DeVon Franklin — the team behind 2014's \$100 million hit *Heaven is for Real* — who say they aim to make movies for all audiences, not just religious ones.

"I think sometimes when people hear 'faith-based,' to them that is code for preachy, that is code for more medicine, and it's also sometimes code for lower quality, lower budgeted," Franklin said in a recent interview.

"It's the way people think when you use labels that is the barrier," Jakes said. "It's not necessarily the film, but the image that comes up in people's minds ... It suggests a discrimination that was not intended. We didn't do this film just for people of faith. We did this film for everybody."



Jennifer Garner, left, Queen Latifah and Kylie Rogers in *Miracles from Heaven*. HANDOUT

Other entertainment aimed at Christian audiences, including new films *The Young Messiah* and *God's Not Dead 2*, and the live TV special *The Passion* (airing Sunday), take a more re-

ligious approach.

Miracles From Heaven is based on Christy Beam's 2015 memoir, which describes her family's struggles and her own crisis of faith when daughter Anna is

diagnosed with an incurable digestive disorder, then has a potentially deadly fall. But following the mishap, Anna has no serious injuries and ultimately shows no signs of the disorder. She later tells her mom she went to heaven and talked to Jesus during the ordeal.

The film is being released Wednesday by Sony's Affirm Films, the studio's specialty faith division established in 2007.

Affirm also released *Heaven is for Real*, starring Greg Kinnear, which is similarly based on a parent's account of a child's divine experience. The film had a reported \$12 million budget and made more than \$100 million at the box office.

Paramount's *Captive*, released last fall, was a modest faith-based success. Also a true story, it stars David Oyelowo as Brian Nichols, an escaped murderer who takes

a single mother (Kate Mara) hostage, then lets her go after she reads a Christian book to him. Despite mixed reviews, it more than doubled its small budget at the box office.

Marketing a film as faith-based means nothing if the content doesn't speak to religious audiences, said Maria Elena de Las Carreras, a professor of international cinema at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television.

"It's a label, but it's not magical. It doesn't guarantee box-office turnout," she said, citing Paramount's 2014 big-budget Biblical flop, *Noah*.

"Audiences flock to well-made films that deal with stories of optimism and renewal, even if there is suffering and there is loss," she said. "That was true in classic Hollywood cinema and it's true today." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE TV DINNER JESSICA ALLEN



What the two actors express in brief glances is extraordinary, especially considering that De Sica cast non-professionals

toria De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves*, one of the first films Simon and I ever watched together. The 1948 post-World War II film, which comes out on a new Criterion Blu-Ray special edition on March 29, is about a working class man, Antonio Ricci, who gets a job hanging posters on the caveat that he owns a bicycle. Ricci's wife pawns their bed linen in order to get Antonio's bike out of hock. Just as life looks sunnier for the young family, the bike is stolen. The rest of the film chronicles Antonio and his young son Bruno's quest for it in the gritty streets of Rome.

There's a single respite: seeing that Bruno is exhausted and disillusioned, Antonio offers to take him for a pizza with what little money he has left. As soon as they enter a restaurant, they (and the audience) know that everyone else is better-appointed than they are. It's not the type of place



that serves pizza. So they order mozzarella in carrozza and a carafe of wine. Sweet Bruno, who barely knows how to use a knife and fork, eats his sandwich and drinks his wine with gusto. For a heart-breaking moment, they've not a trouble in the world.

What the two actors, Lamberto Maggiorani and Enzo Staiola, express in brief glances — from desperation to exultation — is extraordinary, espe-

cially considering that De Sica cast non-professionals. (Maggiorani was a factory worker and Staiola was a neighbourhood boy who De Sica spotted from his car.)

Bicycle Thieves is, of course, political: it examines the social problems of postwar Italian reconstruction. But its themes — including how our lives can feel both predetermined and full of chance — are universal. In 1999 Roger Ebert gave the

film four stars on account of this: "it is a simple, powerful film about a man who needs a job," he wrote. "[It] had such an impact on its first release that when the British film magazine *Sight & Sound* held its first international poll of film makers and critics in 1952, it was voted the greatest film of all time."

After we recently re-watched it, we agreed the film was more impactful the second time around, particularly the ending when out of desperation Antonio steals a bike and is mobbed by an angry crowd while Bruno, in tears, watches on. The last shot, a tip of the hat to fellow director Charlie Chaplin, shows Antonio and Bruno dissolving into a crowd. "It's a perfect film," Simon said as we wiped our eyes. There weren't any other words. By chance, we recently walked into Terroni, the place where I passed from my twenties into my thirties and became something approximating an adult, and where, by chance, I first met Simon. And, by chance, there on the special's menu, was mozzarella in carrozza. Our eyes lit up.

Jessica Allen is the digital correspondent on CTV's *The Social*.

FILM BRIEF

China-Tinseltown venture unveils a dozen new movies

A joint Hollywood and Chinese production house announced this week a slew of upcoming films, including an action-horror flick about a giant shark, as moviemakers increasingly look to tap into China's vast market.

The announcement in Hong Kong was made by Flagship Entertainment, a tie-up between Warner Brothers, China Media Capital and Hong Kong television broadcaster TVB and comes with Hollywood awash with constantly growing Chinese funding.

Flagship unveiled 12 new films. They include *Meg*, about the discovery of a gigantic ancestor of the great white shark, and *Beautiful Coma*, a romance co-produced by Hong Kong director Peter Chan and U.S. director Brett Ratner, who directed the *Rush Hour* franchise.

Other productions include a remake of *Miss Congeniality* and another comedy *Mission Milano* which stars popular Hong Kong actor Andy Lau. *AFP*

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DEATH OF A DRAMA

Looking for clues as to why Motive cancelled

We know the victim: Vancouver-based police drama *Motive*, which returns Tuesday at 10 p.m. ET on CTV, for a fourth and final season.

The network is pulling the trigger after this. What we don't have is the motive for killing *Motive*. Here are the usual suspects:

Poor ratings?

Nope. *Motive*, has a strong and loyal audience. Season 3 was watched by an average 1.2 million viewers a week. It was among the most-watched Canadian dramas last season.

The cast hates each other?

No evidence of that during a Vancouver set visit last December. "We love working together so much," says Kristin Lehman (Det. Angie Flynn). The dynamic between the two leads: Det. Flynn (Lehman) and Det. Oscar Vega (Louis Ferreira) is less of the usual romantic tension, more friendship. But cop shows thrive on conflict

and networks encourage it. Ferreira gets the Vega-Flynn relationship "may not be as dynamic as some other shows," but he's still damn proud of it.

Rejected by America?

Maybe. When ABC dropped *Motive* after its second summer run, the clock was ticking to find a new broadcast partner. Executive producer Dennis Heaton (Call Me Fitz) said he always understood he was producing the show for CTV and NBC.

HAIRCUT CURSE

The show *Felicity* died after Keri Russell cut her hair. *Motive* star Kristen Lehman cut her hair, too. Connection?

It's too Canadian

Motive hid some of its Vancouver-ness, "fictionalizing" the police world a little, admits Heaton. That seemed to change the last two seasons.

"There's a very Vancouver sensibility to it," he says, telling his writing staff at one point, "Enough developers! Enough with the construction guys!"

The "Anywhere, USA" approach was seen in the past as a way to grow a show internationally. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toast pops from Shonda Rhimes' creative brain



Jerrika Hinton will star in Shonda Rhimes' new pilot, *Toast*. GETTY

FALL SEASON

Pilot features cast of Grey's Anatomy in fresh new roles

The creator of a slew of series for ABC has picked a star surgeon from *Grey's Anatomy* for the lead role in her new pilot, *Toast*, developed for the 2016/2017 season, and vying for a spot on ABC's fall schedule.

Known to fans of the small-screen series as Stephanie Edwards, a surgical resident in *Grey's Anatomy*, Jerrika Hinton will star in Shonda Rhimes' newest creation.

Toast is set at the rehearsal dinner of Max and Page, the night before their wedding. Over the course of the evening, their family and friends share anecdotes about the pair as they toast the couple. This leads to a series of flashbacks showing the highs and lows the couple encountered on the road to marriage.

Jerrika Hinton plays Page, a no-nonsense woman from a well-to-do Texas family. Her future husband, Max, played by Jono Kenyon, is quite the opposite. Having dropped out of college and with his father in prison, this charismatic but clumsy character is worried about what his in-laws really think.

The pilot will see Jerrika Hinton star alongside fellow *Grey's Anatomy* cast member, Tessa Ferrer, who played intern Leah Murphy in Seasons 9 and 10, before being fired by Dr. Weber. She'll be playing Jules in the new pilot, Max's tomboyish best friend.

Toast is the second pilot developed by Shonda Rhimes for the autumn 2016 season on US TV, together with *Still Star-Crossed*, inspired by Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. She already has three shows on American TV, with *Grey's Anatomy*, *Scandal* and *How to Get Away With Murder*. A fourth series, *The Catch*, is set to air March 24.

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Symbolism on the wall of Breaking Bad

PICTURE THIS

Art a window into world of Breaking Bad and its prequel

In the first and final seasons of the TV phenomenon that was Breaking Bad, the same painting crossed paths with protagonist Walter White (Bryan Cranston) and not by chance: It depicted a man alone in a boat, rowing from a beach where a woman and two children were bidding him farewell, and its symbolism — that of someone willingly pulling away from their family — was an unmistakable link to the show's core.

The painting's appearance twice in different settings within the series' larger world was a terrifically sly, small-detail nod to viewers paying attention to everything showrunner Vince Gilligan and his crack team of producers put before them.

But when the smash hit and critical darling wrapped its 62-episode run in 2013, Gilligan & Co. didn't have that meticulous attention to the craft drift into the brilliant New Mexico horizon. Rather, they carried it into their next project: AMC's prequel spin-off Better Call Saul, on which Gilligan collaborates with Breaking Bad writer/producer Peter Gould as executive co-producers.

As part of their larger effort to tell as rich, robust and rewarding a story as possible, they also continued a subtle, savvy employment of pictures — of wall art and the still image — as windows into characters' souls and destinies.

By and large, the art of Better Call Saul was obscured by shadow in its first season, but so was one of the plot's key components. (Fair warning: spoilers are ahead.)

Whenever audiences saw a picture or painting, it was usually located in the home belonging to Chuck McGill, brother of series centrepiece Jimmy McGill/Saul Goodman.

Chuck's psychosomatic "al-

lergy" to electromagnetism leaves his house shrouded in darkness and that includes his extensive art collection. As a result, we either saw only the frames or art that was half-lit. We didn't have the full picture, either, of the overarching story.

Now, four episodes into the series' second season, Better Call Saul's relationship with art has become a portal into Jimmy and Mike Ehrmantraut, its two characters with the biggest roles in the Breaking Bad universe.

The art that surrounds Jimmy/



In Breaking Bad, this painting of a man alone in a boat, rowing from a beach where a woman and two children bid him farewell, crossed paths with protagonist Walter White twice — in the first and final seasons. CONTRIBUTED



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The Power to Surprise

of cargo; the second is a painting of a man, falling backward, with no hands and a potted plant in place of his head.

Together, the two works underscore who Jimmy/Saul is. The empty train car signifies the emotional hole in him while also bringing to mind one of Breaking Bad's most memorable robberies: the pilfering of a train in its final season. The falling body represents the ongoing plummet, personally and professionally, of a man nicknamed Slippin' Jimmy in his formative years.

The lack of hands of the falling man suggests Jimmy isn't entirely in control of his fate, and the plant where his head should be reinforces the reality the character is still growing. It also serves as a wonderful connection to one of Walter White's most heinous schemes in Breaking Bad, a scheme Saul helped him pull off. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CANVASSED

Framing the story arc

In Breaking Bad, the painting of the rowing man debuts when White's cancer is diagnosed. It appears for the second time when he has morphed into crystal meth kingpin Heisenberg and lowered himself to partner with a gang of neo-Nazi murderers. Put differently, he initially encounters the art when the rot in him is physical and then again when the disease that's overtaken him is spiritual.

INTERVIEW

Actor shocked at resurrection of Tio in Better Call Saul

There was precious little to glean from Breaking Bad about one of its greatest villains, Hector (Tio) Salamanca. But with just one appearance on Better Call Saul, we've already got a taste of a rich backstory.

Warning: read no further to avoid spoilers for either series.

Actor Mark Margolis was surprised when he heard his cartel character was being revived for the Breaking Bad prequel,

which focuses on the origins of Bob Odenkirk's slippery lawyer character Saul Goodman.

But he relished the chance to return to New Mexico and re-team with creator Vince Gilligan, who killed Tio off with a spectacular TV death that also took out vengeful drug boss Gus Fring, played by Giancarlo Esposito.

Wheelchair bound, mute, and possibly brain damaged, Tio Salamanca commanded his

murderously loyal nephews with just the tap of a bell.

On Monday's episode of Better Call Saul — which takes place roughly six years before the events of Breaking Bad — he turned up able-bodied, English-speaking and sharp as a tack. He strongly encouraged former dirty cop Mike Ehrmantraut to help spare his nephew Tuco some jail time.

Margolis chatted recently by

phone about revisiting his "monstrous" character.

On Better Call Saul we hear Tio Salamanca speak English for the first time, albeit with a thick Mexican accent.

The first episode (of Breaking Bad) I was ever in they thought I was kind of catatonic or brain dead sitting in front of a TV with a novela playing, and Jesse and Walt

were conspiring to poison my nephew. Granted, a lot of what's going on I can see visually but they were also speaking about what they wanted to do. So you could make an assumption that I do understand some of what they're saying as well.

It must be nice to know your character is guaranteed to survive this series.

But at any moment (Vince) can have me fall over and be completely without the ability to speak and I'm sure he has that in mind somewhere. With Vince it can happen at any moment ... I could be struck by a bullet, I could be hit by a car, I could have a sudden stroke, a seizure, lightning might come down and strike me from heaven.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Marvel's Elektra is a 'sociopath': Actress

NETFLIX

Yung plays Daredevil's love interest in second season

Elektra, the ninja warrior and love interest of the Marvel superhero Daredevil has not fared well in the minds of some fans.

The last time we saw her she was played by Jennifer Garner in the 2005 movie of the same name. Garner, wife of former Daredevil Ben Affleck, played Elektra less as damaged psychopath and more like a suburban soccer mom with a bag full of ninja flying stars.

That image will likely be erased with the second season of Netflix's Daredevil which lands Friday.

French-Cambodian actress Elodie Yung has been cast as Elektra Natchios, and she seems determined to hew to Frank Miller's much more intense vision of the character.

"She's basically a sociopath," says Yung in an interview. "That's basically how I played her. She can't bond properly with anyone. For her it's a game. She is a complex character who suffered when she was young and now tries to fight her demons. But she copes in the sense that if she has a goal to achieve, nothing will stop her."

Yung seems born for the role of Elektra. For one thing, she is a black belt in karate. She's also got smarts, having a masters in law from the University of Paris. This is also not her first time at the ninja superhero



Elodie Yung stars as Elektra in Season 2 of Netflix's Daredevil. CONTRIBUTED

game, having played the very Elektra-like Jinx in G.I. Joe: Retaliation.

"I think yes, she has some darkness in her definitely. I think there's a journey to her. She will question all that. She will try to find the truth about herself," says Yung. "She is mysteriously cold, and she's a very mysterious character when she comes back into Matt

(Daredevil) and his world. But still, there is something deep going on between the two."

The complexity of the character seems to suit the new, darker Netflix Marvel universe, of which the first season of Daredevil proved to be a hit. The follow up series Jessica Jones — the best superhero show of 2015 — followed on that premise, with several

more series still in production culminating in the team-up series The Defenders.

Fans of Season 1 will find Season 2 mostly satisfying, but not as intriguing as the first. This time around Daredevil has some superhero buddy help to keep things interesting. Critics were given the first seven episodes of the season.

In Season 2 Matt Murdoch

is joined by not just Elektra, but Frank Castle, also known as The Punisher played by The Walking Dead's Jon Bernthal. Deborah Ann Woll, Elden Henson and Rosario Dawson also return.

What made Season 1 riveting was the origins story of how a blind lawyer turns into the man without fear. The character arc of Murdoch coincides

with the rise of the Kingpin (Vincent D'Onofrio) as one of the best villains on television.

Without a charismatic villain, the writers don't get luxury of that kind of back story to play with in the new season. Much of the first half of the second season is Daredevil jousting with his new superhero buddies, which is good fun — but not the psychodrama of Season 1.

Bernthal's Punisher feels flat — although the character is difficult to play since his mood ranges from rage to over the top rage and it's hard to find emotional common ground.

Yung's Elektra as love interest and superhero is more rounded and intriguing. She adds an icy, subversive element that contrasts with Matt Murdoch's boy scout leanings.

Yung says she grappled to coming to terms with the character when she was first cast.

"It was my big problem at the beginning when I started to dig into what is a sociopath. I ... needed to get empathy, not to judge her. She lies, she kills, I didn't want to judge that," says Yung. "I needed to understand that aspect of her to portray her. It's one of the most complex characters I've had to play."

So far Yung says she has not viewed the 2005 Elektra film because she didn't want to be influenced by the role. She did read the comics though.

"I got really inspired by them. It's a wonderful piece of art. It gave you such a strong image of Elektra as a complex character who suffered when she was young and tries to fight her demons."

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You've seen his face, you just don't know where

INTERVIEW

Billions star David Costabile is quite the chameleon

For years, David Costabile has flourished as a most familiar unknown star, the sort of all-purpose actor you like and recognize but aren't sure from where.

With a laugh, he recalls being accosted by a fan in a Pennsylvania shopping mall who blurted out, "Hey! Are you -? Uh, do I -? Do YOU know ME?"

Fans, new and old, are welcoming Costabile in his latest role as Mike "Wags" Wagner on the Showtime power-battle drama *Billions*. In this lively clash of a U.S. Attorney (Paul Giamatti) and the hedge-fund titan he wants to take down, Costabile plays attack dog and consigliere to high-flying financier Bobby Axelrod (played by Damian Lewis).

"Bad idea," jokes Axelrod as Wags assists in swapping out his dress shirt for an upcoming meeting. "No man is a hero to his valet."

"That goes double for his COO," Wags fires back in his clipped purr. "So you are (expletive) with me either way."

On *Billions* (which airs Sundays at 10 p.m. Eastern), Wags Wagner is giving viewers one more dot to connect with the many characters Costabile has logged in the past, some so different it's hard to remember they're all him.

He was the stone-hearted managing editor on *The Wire* and a doofus, cuckolded husband on *Flight of the Conchords*. He was the fussy former law partner on *Suits* and the savage police detective on *Damages*.

On the movie screen, he played a pivotal U.S. congressman in Steven Spielberg's *Lincoln* and a pivotal CIA operative in the recent Michael Bay film, *13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi*.

Perhaps he is best remembered as Gale Boetticher, the dweebish, karaoke-fancying chemist who served as lab assistant to crystal-meth king Walter White on *Breaking Bad*. As Gale, an eclectic loner with a taste for the poetry of Walt Whitman, he hurled the series toward its explosive finish as well as stealing every scene he appeared in.

A man with chipmunk cheeks and a broad forehead,



David Costabile is attack dog Mike 'Wags' Wagner in *Billions*. CONTRIBUTED

If you get the opportunity to play lots of different characters in lots of different worlds, you get the opportunity to disappear

David Costabile

a twinkle in his eye and a mischievous smile, the 49-year-old Costabile can morph into different roles almost as if shape-shifting.

But he seems to have a particular gift for characters that are slightly "off."

He acknowledges a penchant for "the ineffectual bureaucratic type — a beige guy who blends into the wall."

But even if he doesn't call attention to himself, you don't dare take your eyes off him, because there's always more to his performance than first meets the eye.

"I feel really lucky that as an actor, you're trained to transform," says Costabile, who after graduation from Tufts University earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from New York University.

"If you get the opportunity to play lots of different characters in lots of different

worlds, you get the opportunity to disappear. That's the most fun: when you get to disappear."

Costabile is expounding on the actor's craft over a recent lunch at a slow-foods Brooklyn bistro near the home he shares in pleasant anonymity ("No photographers on the sidewalk," he chuckles) with his wife, actress Eliza Baldi, and their infant daughter.

A Washington native, he acted in high school musicals, and his extensive stage work on and off Broadway was grounded by summers with a regional theatre company performing Shakespeare free outdoors in Albany, New York.

"It's something you're always chasing," he says of acting.

"There's never a moment when you can actually be satisfied. It's exciting to do something that you know you

cannot succeed at, only hope to get closer to success."

He says he tries to take the road less travelled in each role.

"I'm not interested in what's on-the-nose," he explains. "I read the script and I say, 'Well, that's what SHOULD happen, so I'm not going to do that.' My wife says, 'Why DON'T you?'"

"But that's boring! I want to take an oblique angle to get to the answer. That's the more interesting path. Maybe it's because I'm obstinate."

For Costabile, the joy of acting comes from the element of surprise.

"I don't want you to know what's next, what I'm gonna do or think," he says. "I want to constantly push people off-balance. Even my fellow actors."

Taking the character somewhere new "without people saying, 'What the (heck) are you doing, that doesn't make sense' — it's tricky to do! But it's important. For the audience and" — he flashes an impish grin — "for me."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LUXURY, LOCATION AND COMMUNITY

It's no secret why maintenance free bungalows are such a popular option for Edmonton's seniors.

Downsizing from a single family home to a bungalow condo takes a huge load off your mind and body: finally, you're relieved of the physical and financial stress of maintaining a property. These communities give owners well-deserved time to relax and enjoy extra leisure and family time.

If you've been admiring this lifestyle option from afar, the added benefits offered by the new SW Edmonton bungalow community of Triumph Ambleside might make you finally take the plunge.

Luxury: Upgraded finishes like granite in the kitchens, wrought iron railings, hardwoods and high ceilings are standard, and you'll enjoy a complimentary, private design consultation to custom select your interior colours. Triumph Ambleside offers spacious plans up to 1502 sq. ft. with both classic and open-concept designs available. You certainly won't be compromising on your master suite; look

for Triumph's signature towering windows, massive walk-in closets and bathrooms with separate tubs and walk-in showers. Basement development options offer additional space that is customizable to fulfill your lifestyle needs.

Location: Triumph Ambleside boasts an address in sought after Windermere, with easy access to some of the city's best shopping and state-of-the-art new medical offices at Currents of Windermere. You'll enjoy a healthy, active lifestyle with Terwillegar Rec Centre, River Ridge Golf & Country Club and Jagare Ridge Golf Club all just minutes away. Last but certainly not least, this community offers prime access to the reason you're choosing maintenance-free living in the first place: it's just a fifteen minute drive to the Edmonton International Airport, your connection to sunshine and relaxation all year round.

Community: The design of Triumph Ambleside has been carefully engineered to offer a perfect synthesis of privacy and community. Bask in the luxury of your glamorous master



CONTRIBUTED

suite, entertain in your stunning kitchen and living spaces, and appreciate gorgeously landscaped grounds from your generous, sociable rear deck or charming covered front porch. Living amongst a close-knit group of likeminded neighbours will be the cherry on

top of your much-deserved decision to become a maintenance free bungalow owner.

To experience this stunning community for yourself, visit TriumphBungalows.com or stop by the show homes at 7115 Armour Link in South Ambleside.

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How the stars brought golf to Palm Springs



With more than a 110 courses and a 1950s ring-a-ding vibe, Palm Springs is one of the best places to golf in North America. COURTESY OF VISITGREATERPALMSPRINGS.COM

CALIFORNIA

Desert oasis a top place to tee-off

Brian Kendall
For Metro Canada



Golf and Palm Springs go together like Bob Hope and Bing Crosby.

Hope, Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and other celebrity golfers helped popularize the game in a desert oasis famous as Hollywood's Haven.

Just 193 kilometres east of downtown Los Angeles, Palm Springs provided a welcome es-

cape from the city's smog and congestion. The stars came to bask in the abundant sunshine and delight in the starkly dramatic scenery of the Coachella Valley.

With more than 110 courses, golf remains a major draw throughout a popular sunbird destination that works hard to retain its ring-a-ding 1950s vibe. Between tee-offs, budget time for a tour of the sleekly elegant midcentury modern hotels and civic buildings, shopping on posh North Palm Canyon Drive, and a happy hour cocktail at Melvyn's, one of Sinatra's old haunts.

Golf came to the Coachella Valley in 1925 with the opening of O'Donnell Golf Club, a

private course frequented by Clark Gable and other matinee idols.

Today, courses by acclaimed golf architects are scattered throughout Greater Palm Springs, an area encompassing old Palm Springs and eight seamlessly connected sister communities, most notably La Quinta, Palm Desert and Indian Wells.

Former host of the Bob Hope Classic, SilverRock Resort's Arnold Palmer Classic Course in La Quinta is spectacularly routed along the base of the Santa Rosa Mountains. La Quinta is also home to PGA West, one of North America's premier golf properties. Most famous of the resort's six layouts is

the Stadium Course, a Pete Dye-designed monster rated one of the game's best — and toughest — courses.

A highlight in Palm Desert is Shadow Ridge Golf Club, an expertly sculpted Australia Sandbelt-inspired course by Nick Faldo. Equally strong are the two Hurdzan-Fry designs at Desert Willow Golf Resort.

And the must-play in Indian Wells is the Players Course at Indian Wells Golf Resort. This unyielding John Fought design stretches nearly 7,400 yards from the tips.

Other top courses include Eagle Falls Golf Course, Escena Golf Club, the Pete Dye and Gary Player layouts at Westin Mission Hills Golf Resort and Spa, and Shadow Mountain Golf Club, one

of the few courses designed by the legendary Gene Sarazen.

With street names like Jack Benny Road, Gene Autry Trail and Ginger Rogers Road, even the drive to your next tee time or sightseeing excursion becomes more adventure than chore in this celebrity obsessed burg.

Sunnylands, at the intersec-

tion of Frank Sinatra and Bob Hope Drives in Rancho Mirage, is another notable haunt of Hollywood luminaries past and present.

Built in the 1960s for publisher, diplomat and philanthropist Walter Annenberg, the pink-roofed Desert Modernism-style mansion (complete with a nine-hole golf course) is now open to the public.

Presidents from Eisenhower to Obama have visited. When greeting Queen Elizabeth in 1983, Annenberg announced she would "see how ordinary Americans live."

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Tap into popular sugaring-off season

QUEBEC

Syrup-soaked meals, maple forest walks signal spring

It's a sweet Quebec tradition that is a sign of spring being right around the corner.

Sugaring-off season is big business in the province, which accounts for nearly three-quarters of the maple syrup produced uniquely in North America.

As production ratchets up, business gets booming at a few hundred restaurant-style "cabanes a sucre" sprinkled around the province.

Louis-Robert Handfield, owner of the Auberge Handfield inn and an adjoining maple farm in Saint-Marc-sur-Richelieu, says locals embrace the season as a way of shaking off a winter's worth of cabin fever.

"I strongly believe people go to the sugar shack anticipating the coming of the spring," Handfield said.

And of course the tradition-

+ IF YOU GO

How to find them

There are plenty of sugar shack options within a short drive of major cities like Montreal or Quebec City. A partial list is available from Quebec's Tourism Department.

Special requests

If you're interested in vegetarian/vegan options, best to call ahead and reserve. Reservations are also needed for some of the smaller sugar shacks, but given the popularity, be prepared to wait in line.

al, heavy meal, all drowned in the sweet, sticky maple syrup.

Menus vary slightly among restaurants, but typically include pea soup with ham, maple-smoked ham and sausages, crisp pork rinds, baked beans, eggs and fresh bread. It's topped off with desserts like deep-fried dough, sugar pie, doughnuts and crepes.

In recent years, a handful of establishments, including Handfield's, have started offering vegan, vegetarian and non-pork options.

"We had a lot of families who wouldn't come because one of the family members had a specific dietary requirement — be it vegetarian, vegan

or without pork or lactose-free or gluten-free," he said.

Handfield says this will be third years he's offered items like tofu, vegetable polenta, green pea soup with mint, and baked trout in a soya-and-maple lacquer.

In addition, there's a chart at the table letting patrons know that regular shack staples such as boiled potatoes, coleslaw, marinated beets and pickles are available.

Tinkering with sugar shack menus may have caused a stir a decade ago, but there's no controversy here, Handfield assures.

The regular meal still accounts for 85 per cent of busi-

ness.

"We offer both types of meals," Handfield said. "We make sure we don't touch the integrity of the traditions."

Some Quebecers see a trip to a sugar shack as part of their ancestral history.

"We come here every year and the meal is something we look forward to," Michel Menard said as he waited in line with his family at La Goudrelle, a sugar shack near Mont-Saint-Gregoire, south of Montreal.

"It's nice to get out to the country for some fresh air and also, it's as kid-friendly as it comes."

Many shacks offer a range of activities: traditional music, children's face painting, pony rides, tractor rides and petting zoos.

Aside from the meal, the other musts include walking through the maple forest to work off the meal.

And of course the maple taffy — known as "tire" in French, made from ladling boiling syrup on fresh snow and twirling it on to a Popsicle stick.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Guests at Domaine Handfield sugar shack take a tractor ride through the forest, in Saint Marc-sur Richelieu, Que.

RYAN REMIORZ/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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NHL IN BRIEF

Panthers handle Leafs

Jussi Jokinen scored two strange goals to help the Florida Panthers to a 4-1 win in Toronto on Thursday night, further solidifying their Atlantic Division lead.

Jaromir Jagr and Teddy Purcell added empty-net goals for the Panthers.

Morgan Rielly scored for the Leafs, who had a two-game win streak snapped.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Crosby keeps Pens hot

Sidney Crosby scored a pair of highlight-reel goals and the Pittsburgh Penguins rallied past the Carolina Hurricanes 4-2 on Thursday night for their fourth straight victory.

Crosby extended his points streak to 10 consecutive games as Pittsburgh strengthened its grip on seventh in the crowded Eastern Conference playoff race.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wings strike in third

Henrik Zetterberg and Darren Helm scored in the third period to lead the Detroit Red Wings to a 3-1 victory over the Columbus Blue Jackets on Thursday night.

Luke Glendening also scored and Jimmy Howard stopped 27 shots as Detroit moved a point ahead of Philadelphia for the Eastern Conference's second wild-card playoff spot.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



American-born commissioner Gary Bettman presents 2015 Stanley Cup to Canadian Jonathan Toews. BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

All-American worry

STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS

Bettman hopes Canadian fans keep watching post-season

With the rare prospect of an all-American NHL post-season looming large, Gary Bettman hopes Canadians still tune in to watch the battle for the Stanley Cup.

The NHL commissioner acknowledged in an interview there is a sense of uncertainty regarding TV ratings in Canada,

with no Canadian teams likely to qualify for the playoffs for the first time since 1970.

Still, he was hopeful that fans north of the border would tune in regardless.

Bettman said local teams "tend to draw better" in terms of ratings.

"But as long as the hockey is entertaining and exciting and competitive we're hoping and expecting that fans will tune in and watch great hockey," he added.

The four lowest-placed teams in the NHL are Canadian, as are six of the bottom 10. The Toronto Maple Leafs and Ed-

monton Oilers currently have the fewest points in the league, just behind the Calgary Flames and Winnipeg Jets.

Last season five clubs from Canada — Calgary, Montreal, Ottawa, Winnipeg and Vancouver — qualified for the post-season. One year earlier it was only one — Montreal, also the last Canadian team to capture

"Fifty per cent of the players ... are from Canada."

Gary Bettman

the Stanley Cup in 1993.

Bettman said the wealth of Canadian talent should be enough to attract interest, as should the appeal of exciting, competitive hockey.

From Jonathan Toews to Drew Doughty to Jamie Benn to Patrice Bergeron and Steven Stamkos, Canadian players will indeed be well represented come playoff time.

"Fifty per cent of the players in this game are from Canada so for people to suggest that there isn't still a Canadian-centric focus I think is a little misleading," Bettman said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

Thornton may play till age 40

Joe Thornton knows he would look a lot younger if he shaved his bushy, grey-streaked beard.

By far the oldest player among the NHL's leading scorers, the 36-year-old San Jose Sharks centre is getting better with age at a time when the league is trending younger. With nearly a point per game this season, he's on pace to become just the 13th player 35 and older to amass 80 points in a season since 1990.

"He's playing as well as I've ever seen him play, he really is," said Sharks general manager Doug Wilson.

"To me, he is a young 36-year-old and a lot of it is attitude and spirit. This guy is a special, special guy."

Exuberant in his passion for the game, Thornton sees no end in sight to his Hall-of-Fame career. Could he play as long as the now-44-year-old Jaromir Jagr?

"Ohhh man, what a question," said a relaxed, yet energetic Thornton during a phone interview from San Jose. "It would be great if I could, but that's still eight years away."

Playing until the age 40 seems more likely, said Thornton, who has one year remaining on his contract with the Sharks.

"I feel good. My body feels good. My mind feels good. I love going to the rink every day. I love the fellowship with the guys, the competition,"

Thornton said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

SPEED SKATING

Morrison elated as he gets his skates on

The result didn't matter to Denny Morrison. Stepping to the start line and racing did.

Less than a year after serious injuries sustained in a motorcycle wreck nearly ended not just his speedskating career but his life, the decorated Olympian raced a men's 1,000 metres at the Olympic Oval in Calgary.

Morrison owns four Olympic medals, including a team pursuit gold from 2010. He won silver in the 1,000 and bronze in the 1,500 in 2014 for Canada's only medals in long-track speedskating.

But the 30-year-old veteran from Fort St. John, B.C., admitted to feeling incredibly nervous in the 24 hours prior to Thursday's Canada Cup race, which would have otherwise been a low-key event for him.

"I was more nervous for this race than I was for the Olympics because nervousness can be associated directly with your level of preparation," Morrison said.

His time of one minute 9.41 seconds surpassed expectations. It would have been good enough for fourth, but it was scrapped on a technicality.

"My time doesn't count, but I know what the time was and if it was a World Cup where I would stack up," he said.

"So much patience was involved in getting here today"

Denny Morrison

"I felt like a junior. I didn't know how prepared I was for this race, I didn't know what my expectations were, I didn't know how hard to try and I didn't know what I was capable of. The nerves were out the roof. The heart was pitter-pattering away."

Along with a broken right

leg, Morrison suffered a concussion, a punctured lung, a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his knee, bruised liver and kidneys and a small fracture in a bone near his spine when his motorcycle struck a left-turning car May 7 in Calgary.

Laying in his hospital bed last May, Morrison vowed to be back racing this World Cup season. His banged-up body had a different timetable.

"So much patience was involved in getting here today, but I guess patience is something I've improved on in the last year," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Denny Morrison has won four Olympic medals. GETTY IMAGES FILE

EUROPA LEAGUE

United's misery is deepened by 'Pool

A stunning solo goal by Philippe Coutinho helped Liverpool eliminate great rival Manchester United from the Europa League, while titleholder Sevilla and tournament favourite Borussia Dortmund also reached the quarterfinals with ease on Thursday.

Liverpool drew 1-1 with United at Old Trafford to seal a 3-1 aggregate victory, with Coutinho scoring the equalizer — and all-important away goal — on the stroke of halftime by dribbling into the box and applying an extravagant chip for his finish.

The draw for the quarterfinals, which also includes Sparta Prague, Braga of Portugal, Spanish pair Villarreal and Athletic Bilbao and Ukrainian powerhouse Shakhtar Don-



Scorer Philippe Coutinho.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

etsk, takes place in Switzerland on Friday.

Man United's only possible route to next season's Champions League now rests solely through a top-four finish in the Premier League, which is currently looking unlikely with the team in sixth place with nine games left.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Gee-Gees fall to Huskies

Dalyce Emmerson had 25 points to lead the second-ranked Saskatchewan Huskies past No. 7 Ottawa Gee-Gees 73-62 on Thursday at the Canadian university women's basketball tournament.

In other action, the Saint Mary's Huskies edged the Alberta Pandas 53-52. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jays split Grapefruit pair

Carlos Correa and Preston Tucker homered Thursday in the Houston Astros' 7-5 split-squad win over a Toronto Blue Jays split

squad. Scott Diamond tossed two perfect innings as the second half of the Jays split squad blanked the Canadian junior national team 12-0.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tough draw for U-20s

Canada has been given a stiff test in Group B with Nigeria, Japan and Spain for the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup in Papua New Guinea in November.

Nigeria, the seeded team in the pool, was runner-up to Germany in 2014 and fourth in 2012.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

BOXING

Double delight as Rio tickets punched

Canadian boxers Mandy Bujold and Ariane Fortin have qualified for this summer's Rio Olympics.

Both fighters won their semifinal bouts at the American qualifying tournament Thursday to book their tickets to Brazil.

Bujold, from Kitchener, Ont., defeated Grazieli Jesus de Sousa of Brazil 3-0 in the 51-kilogram division. A two-time Pan Am Games gold medallist, Bujold failed to qualify for the 2012 London Games where women's boxing made its Olympic debut.

She couldn't contain her excitement on social media.

"I'M GOING TO RIO!!!!!!!" she tweeted. "Words can't describe the way I'm feeling right now! All I can say is Hard Work really does pay off!!! #TeamBujold."

LEMIEUX DATE

David Lemieux of Montreal will face Glen Tapia in his first bout since losing the IBF middleweight title. The battle between Lemieux (34-3-0) and Tapia (23-2-0) will be on the undercard of a middleweight title fight between Canelo Alvarez and Amir Khan on May 7 in Las Vegas.

At 75 kilograms, Fortin, a native of St. Nicholas, Que., edged Brazil's Andreia de Oliveira Bandeira 2-1. Fortin, a two-time world champion, also missed out on London after friend and rival Mary Spencer beat her out for a spot. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Laprise out to make it big Down Under

MMA

'The Disciple' spreads wings to take on UFC Brisbane bout

After 11 straight fights in Canada, lightweight Chad (The Disciple) Laprise was ready to see the world.

He gets his wish Saturday night when he takes on England's Ross (The Real Deal) Pearson on a televised UFC card in Brisbane.

"I actually asked the UFC to fight on this card. Fighting in Australia has always been a dream, of mine," said Laprise. "I've always wanted to go there."

Australia is already part of his fight resumé. The 29-year-old from Chatham, Ont., who trains in Montreal, won "The Ultimate Fighter Nations: Canada vs. Australia" reality TV show as a welterweight.

Rival fighters became friends and Laprise has been training at Brendan (The Badger) O'Reilly's gym in Brisbane. O'Reilly, a TUF Nations alumnus, fights American Alan Jouban on Saturday's card (actually 9 a.m. Sunday Australian time).

Former heavyweight champion Frank Mir (18-10-0) takes on hard-hitting Kiwi Mark Hunt (11-10-1) in the main event at the Brisbane Entertainment Centre. Hunt is ranked ninth



Chad Laprise has fought 11 straight fights on home soil. THE CANADIAN PRESS/ANDREW VAUGHAN

among heavyweight contenders while Mir is No. 10.

Laprise (11-1-0) was originally slated to fight Brazil's Alan Patrick. But eight days before the bout he was shifted to face Pearson (20-10-1 with one no contest) after Pearson's ori-

“Fighting in Australia has always been a dream of mine

Chad Laprise

ginal opponent, Abel Trujillo, dropped off the card.

Former minor-league enforcer Steve (The Boss) Bosse of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Que., fights New Zealand's James Te Huna on the main card. Bosse (10-1-0) was knocked out in 29 seconds in his UFC debut last June by Thiago Santos.

The former Ligue Nord-Américaine de Hockey tough guy was originally slated to make his UFC debut against fellow Canadian Ryan Jimmo in April 2014. But Bosse had to pull out of the fight with a shoulder in-

jury and subsequently retired.

Laprise, who won his first three UFC fights, is coming off a TKO loss to Francisco Trinaldo last August in Saskatoon when he got caught with a punch. Ironically he had obsessed about Trinaldo's "monster left hand".

"He's not a better fighter than me ... I got cracked with one big punch," he said.

This time, he says he's not going to worry about what his opponent is going to do.

"I'm going to go out there and do my thing," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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RECIPE Veggie Sloppy Joes



PHOTO: MAAYA VISNEVI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada



- 1 tsp maple syrup
- 1/4 tsp cumin
- 1/4 tsp chili powder
- 1/4 tsp paprika
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup shaved cheddar

You won't miss the meat but will love the flavour upgrade of this classic comfort meal. Don't forget the napkins.

Ready in

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes
Makes: 4 Sloppy Joes

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 chopped onion
- 1 chopped red pepper
- 2 (14 oz) cans of black beans, rinsed
- 1 (14 oz) can of chick peas, rinsed
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- 2 Tbsp red wine vinegar

Directions

1. In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onions and peppers. Saute until the vegetables are softened.

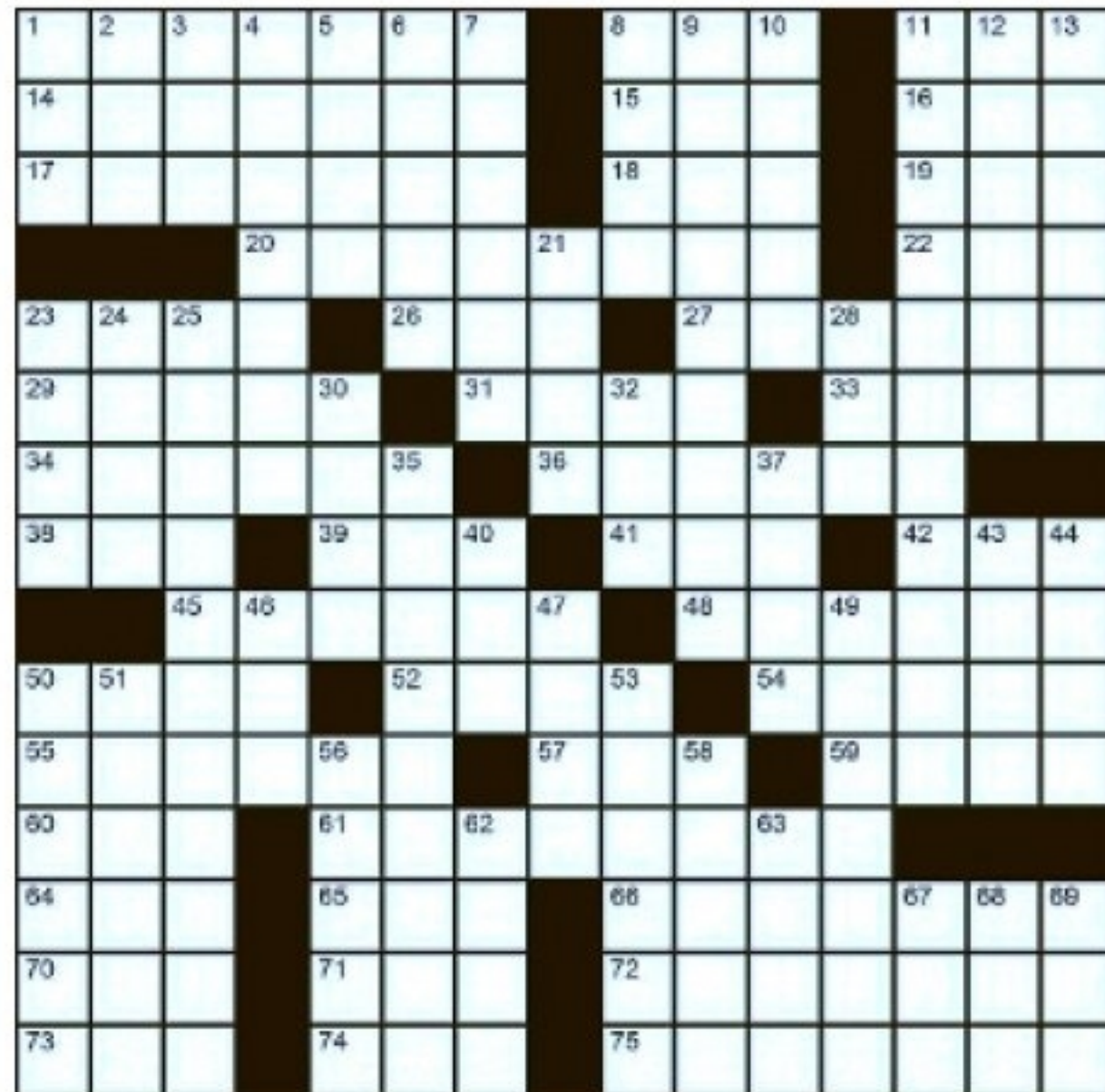
2. Add the beans, tomato sauce, vinegar, maple syrup, cumin, chili powder, paprika and salt. Simmer for 15 minutes.

3. Serve on toasted whole grain bun and sprinkle with cheddar cheese.

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ACROSS

- Unwavering
- Butterfly logo co.
- Dripping on the tree bark
- Tributes
- Stock mkt. debut
- __la-la
- Fashionable
- Women's __ (1970s movement)
- Bard's evening
- Direct opposite as per North, to South
- "Jeff __" (Mid-2000s Canadian comedy series)
- Wee word
- __ Lanka
- Canadian actress Ms. Cuthbert
- McIntosh middles
- Pressure unit
- Some parrots
- New cop
- "Easy there...": 2 wds.
- Tolkien creature
- Alkali
- Business big-wig, briefly
- Howdies
- British actress, __ Bonham Carter
- Weightlifter's pride
- Howard of "Dallas"
- Fair
- Aired again
- Improve
- Li'l old MTV show
- Mr. Beatty's
- Do this at the auction
- Canadian canned soup brand
- Give it __ (Try)

- ...and now, with-out further __"
- "__ Flame" by The Bangles
- Snazzy auto
- Hollywood's Mr. Howard
- "The Beachcombers" star Bruno
- __ Francisco

- Lettered air-line, once
- British Invasion band

DOWN

- Initials-sharers of Suzanne Somers' Canuck hubby
- On the __ (Pre-

- cisely)
- Ms. Schumer
- Victor __ Investigative Reporter on CTV's "W5"
- Opposin'
- Aeries
- Casual top with jeans
- Simon's co-mem-

- ber in Prozzak
- Bug-built bugs capturer: 2 wds.
- The __ Peace Prize
- Howie Mandel played Dr. Wayne Fiscus on what 1982 to 1988 medical drama?: 2 wds.

- "Think" singer Ms. Franklin
- 'Giant' attractions at the Toronto Zoo
- Subatomic particle
- Land unit
- Benefit
- Sam Roberts song that goes "Been looking for peace but they're bringing you war": 2 wds.
- 1965 hit song, when doubled
- Part of a window
- Mythical bird
- Makeup kit item
- Pinot __ (Wine variety)
- Antacid brand
- Apple tablet
- Taxpayers' IDs in The States
- Mr. Wallach
- Sparkling wine city of Italy
- Big name in multivitamins
- BBQ sizzlers, Shish __ [var. sp.]
- 2001 Kate Winslet WWII-set movie
- Canadian songstress Lindi
- __-topper (Hit song)
- Approach nighttime
- __ fide
- Italian saint, Philip __
- Edward Snowden headlines org.
- Communication syst.
69. ' __ for Lethbridge

★ IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
The Sun moves into your birth sign at the weekend, so don't worry if you are feeling a bit under the weather at the moment because you will soon be back to your best.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
If you feel the need to cut yourself off from those around you over the next few days then do so. It may seem rude but good manners are less important now than getting your head in the right place.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Your recent hard work has not gone unnoticed. People are impressed by your attitude and there could be a promotion coming your way in the near future.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
The Sun crosses the career angle of your chart on Sunday, so it won't be long before you get the chance to move up in the world. But don't be tempted to cut corners.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You may think you need to rip everything up and start again from scratch. But it isn't true and in fact would be a backward step. The good times will start in a matter of days, so be patient.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You have spent far too much in recent weeks and if you carry on there may be nothing left. The good news is you will discover a new source of income very soon.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
By the time the Sun enters your opposite sign of Aries on Sunday you should know for certain if a relationship is going to last or if it is best to go your separate ways.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
The Sun's move into the work area of your chart in just a few days means you may need to take on new chores and responsibilities. But know when to say "no" — and mean it.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Certain events may have upset you but there is no point dwelling on them. In a matter of days they will no longer matter. The Sun's change of signs on the 20th will cheer you up to no end.

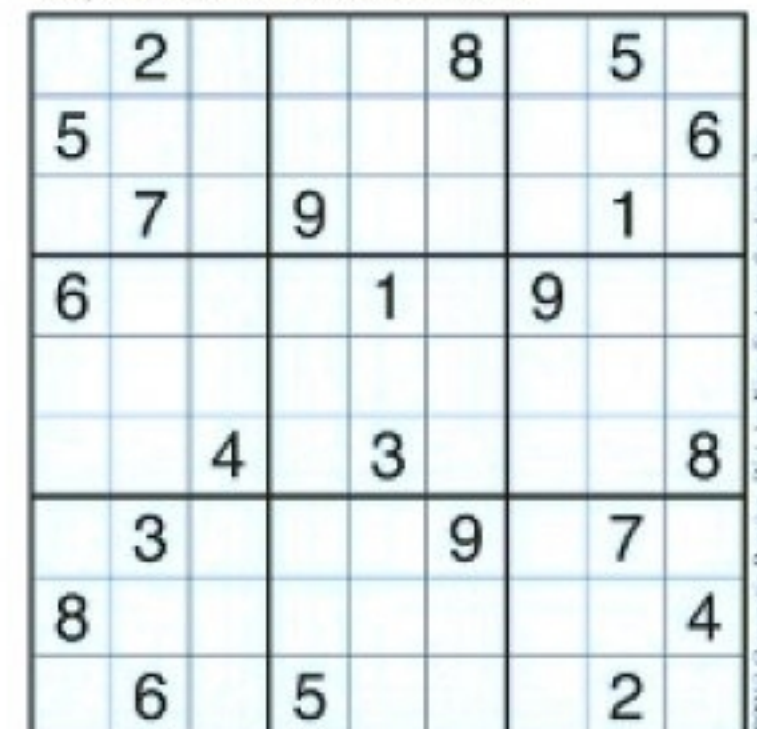
Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
The more you have been rushing here, there and everywhere in recent weeks, the more you must slow down and focus on matters closer to home. Give your full attention to partners and loved ones.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
The past few weeks have not been easy but you stuck at your task and very soon you will get your reward. The pendulum is about to swing in your favour.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
By all means show sympathy for someone who is finding the going tough at the moment, and do what you can to help them.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9



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